



## **DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Hawaii Department of Health Presents Progress in Children's Mental Health; Kaiser Permanente Presents \$20,000 to Hawaii Department of Health for Children's Mental Health Programs**

HONOLULU – Hawaii youth who have experienced trauma and need mental health and other services but may not be suitable for care from traditional sources now have an easier way to receive the help they need.

Friends of Children's Mental Health, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, provides another way for the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division (CAMHD) of the Hawaii State Department of Health to carry on its mission of helping families access different types of services.

Government programs have limited ability to provide a broader range of options for families. Under Friends of Children's Mental Health, families can access non-traditional, culture-based therapeutic activities and receive emergency funding to meet basic needs of food, shelter, clothing, health, safety and education.

Kaiser Permanente recently awarded Friends of Children's Mental Health a \$20,000 grant, which will be used to support child-serving agencies such as CAMHD as well as other government agencies such as the Hawaii Department of Education and the Hawaii Department of Human Services.

The grant from Kaiser Permanente will be used to serve and train youth and their families to live healthy, safe and productive lives. The nonprofit organization will also use the funds to implement statewide workforce development training initiatives to raise awareness about trauma and to provide gender-specific trauma programs.

"Our focus at Kaiser is to eliminate health disparities and inequities. These programs fit in with those objectives. We have high-quality mental health services in our community and now youth are being able to access these services," said Mary Ann Barnes, president of Kaiser Permanente Hawaii. "Hawaii's youth deserve good health, and it is great to be partnering with the Hawaii Department of Health, which shares our vision of making sure that even the most vulnerable youth receive the care they need."

“We are very thankful for partners like Kaiser Permanente. We appreciate the financial support for programs that are changing young lives and enhancing the quality of life for Hawaii’s youth,” said Dr. Virginia Pressler, director of the Hawaii Department of Health. “This generous grant allows families to receive services that Medicaid or other government programs may not cover.”

Friends of Children’s Mental Health is based on the same model of Project Kealahou, a federally-funded program, which provides more flexibility for families to access support options that are not limited to clinic-based services.

Project Kealahou provides mental health and social services support for girls ages 11 to 21 who have been the victims of trauma. Project Kealahou’s success is based in part on the ability to allow families to access services from non-traditional, community-based settings, which are better suited to stressed families than traditional clinic-based services.

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