



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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### FIRST LADY DAWN IGE RECOGNIZES ALOHA PETROLEUM FOR PROMOTING HEALTHY SNACKS AND BEVERAGES

HONOLULU – First Lady Dawn Ige today honored Aloha Petroleum as the first retail business in Hawaii to adopt the Department of Health’s *Choose Healthy Now* project. *Choose Healthy Now* increases consumer access to healthy food and beverages by labeling healthier items at the point-of-decision. The event was followed by a taste test of the healthy items that will be offered.

First Lady Ige is championing the project because she sees the need for easier access to healthy options for Hawaii’s residents. “In today’s society, convenience foods are often the unhealthy ones. It’s nice to see a business taking a stand to actively promote and make the healthier options accessible,” said First Lady Dawn Ige. “We encourage other Hawaii businesses to join us in this effort.”

Aloha Petroleum is piloting the program at its Aloha Island Mart Kahala and Waianae locations, and plans to eventually expand to locations statewide. The pilot stores now feature a healthy “Green (Go!)” section of 17 healthy items.

“We are very pleased to partner with the First Lady and the Department of Health on this initiative,” said Aloha Petroleum President and CEO Richard Parry. “One of our key goals is to provide healthy options for our customers, and to demonstrate to them that you can buy healthy items in a convenience store. *Choose Healthy Now* will make it that much easier for our customers to make good choices.”

*Choose Healthy Now* began as a partnership between the Department of Health and the Department of Human Services’ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Ho’opono Vending Program. It launched in May 2014 with six snack shops in state and federal government buildings on Oahu, and is expanding to an additional 12 sites by January 2016.

Ho’opono vendors have begun labeling all food and drinks as healthy, moderately healthy, or less healthy utilizing green (Go!), yellow (“Slow”), and red (“Uh-oh”) stickers, respectively.

Aloha Petroleum will promote the healthiest green (“Go!”) items in its stores and plans to use written materials, posters, and other resources to inform customers of their options.

The adoption of the *Choose Healthy Now* project by Aloha Petroleum is expected to simplify and facilitate healthier food and beverage choices.

“This program is about giving people better access to healthier options,” said Dr. Virginia Pressler, Director of Health. “With rising obesity and chronic disease rates and skyrocketing health care costs to match, we need to work together to make the healthy choice the easiest, most-appealing choice. For people making life-style changes the convenience of these labeled healthy food options can make the difference for staying on track.”

Poor nutrition is a cornerstone of obesity and chronic disease. One in two adults in Hawaii is overweight or obese (55.4 percent), and four in five adults (82 percent) is living with at least one chronic disease or condition such as diabetes, heart disease or cancer. In 2009, annual direct healthcare costs for obesity among adults in Hawai'i was estimated at \$470 million and \$770 million for diabetes.

For more information about obesity and chronic disease prevention and the *Choose Healthy Now* project, please visit: <http://health.hawaii.gov/chronic-disease>.

Businesses interested in adopting *Choose Healthy Now* can download the Employer's Toolkit at: <http://www.healthyhawaii.com/choose-healthy-now/>.

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