



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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Hawaii State Department of Health's 2015 Alcohol and Drug Treatment Services Report:

Drug Treatment Programs Keep Adult and Adolescent Recidivism Rates Down; but Meth Use Among Older Adults has Almost Doubled Over the Past Five Years

HONOLULU -- Over the past five years, more than half of the adults and adolescents who participated in a substance abuse treatment program and completed a six-month follow-up survey had remained clean, reporting no substance use in 30 days prior to the follow-up. The majority had managed their lives well without any arrests, hospitalizations, and emergency room visits since they had been discharged from the treatment programs, according to the Hawaii State Department of Health's newly published 2015 Alcohol and Drug Treatment Services Report.

In a six-month follow-up study in 2014, almost all adolescents were attending school and nearly 70 percent of adults were employed.

The report is being released to coincide with National Recovery Month, a nationwide recognition of various alcohol and drug treatment programs and initiatives focused on recovery efforts. This year's theme is: "Join the Voices for Recovery: Visible, Vocal and Valuable!"

The Hawaii State Department of Health commissioned University of Hawaii's Center on the Family to conduct the extensive research and analysis to assess the alcohol and drug problem in our state.

"One of the Hawaii Department of Health's foremost priorities is to make the recovery efforts visible, give a voice to those who have recovered, and inspire others in the community to see how valuable these programs have been," said Virginia Pressler, M.D., director of the Hawaii State Department of Health. "We may all know a friend, neighbor or relative who may be bound by alcohol and drug abuse. These are encouraging statistics for all of us in Hawaii."

The success of the recovery programs in Hawaii has largely been the result of collaboration. The Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division of the Hawaii Department of Health remains the primary source of public funds for substance abuse prevention and treatment services in Hawaii.

Over the past five years, from 2010 to 2014, Hawaii invested an average of \$17 million in state and federal funds each year to address alcohol and drug abuse. In 2014, the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division provided funding for 24 agencies at 52 sites to provide treatment for adults, and 10 agencies at 107 sites to offer services for adolescents. In the five-year period, there was a 26 percent increase in sites for adolescents and a 16 percent increase in sites for adults.

While the news about treatment programs have been positive, there are some disturbing trends that the report uncovered. The five-year study shows some alarming statistics: the percentage of adults 50 years and older that reported methamphetamine as their primary substance has nearly doubled in the past five years.

The Department of Health's Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division currently funds 28 providers statewide who focus on meth treatment, plans to continue supporting programs and services to treat meth users, Pressler said.

"There is still much more work that needs to be done in our community in terms of prevention and treatment," said Alan Johnson, chief executive officer of Hina Mauka, Hawaii's largest alcohol and drug treatment program that has provided recovery treatment and ongoing support for adults, teens and families for more than 40 years.

"However, we have a stronger, more comprehensive system of care to address the needs of our community," added Johnson, who also serves as chairman of the Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition, which consists of about 20 treatment programs.

The Hawaii State Department of Health is now in the planning stages for transition and case management services as a next step in the treatment and recovery process to fill the community's need. A request for proposal for these services will be issued in 2016 for services that begin 2017.

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