



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DEPARTMENTS OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES LAUNCH HEALTHY VENDING PROJECT FOR GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

HONOLULU – The Department of Health in partnership with the Department of Human Services' Division of Vocational Rehabilitation *Ho'opono* Vending Program is launching the *Choose Healthy Now* project in eight government vending sites on Oahu. *Choose Healthy Now* increases consumer choice by expanding access to healthy snack and drink options. Stickers and print materials throughout the snack shops will identify healthier items as those labeled with green or yellow stickers. This project was a priority of former Director of Health Loretta "Deliana" Fuddy, who was a champion for healthy eating and worksite wellness.

"Deliana was a strong supporter of healthy worksites," said Deputy Director of Health Keith Yamamoto. "This initiative honors her legacy. She would be proud to see the launch of this project, the partnership with DHS, and the progress we've made."

During the first three months of the project, employees and customers at the eight pilot sites will learn about the project through e-mail messaging, newsletters, and taste testing events. Small incentives will also be offered for employees who choose the healthiest (green-labeled) items.

The project launched today in the Department of Health Kinau Hale Building 5th Floor Snack Shop (1250 Punchbowl St.). At the launch, participating blind vendors received Healthy Vending Champion Awards for being the first to pilot the project in their cafeterias and snack shops. Taste testing was also offered for employees to sample some of the healthy items available.

"We're so proud of our *Ho'opono* blind vendors who have volunteered for this project," said Director of Human Services Patricia McManaman. "They acknowledge the role they play in supporting healthy eating, and they are actively changing the norm for foods sold in worksites."

Providing healthy food options where people work increases the likelihood that people will eat a healthier diet. Poor nutrition is a significant contributor to obesity, which has serious health and economic implications. Currently, the state expends \$470 million a year on obesity-related medical

costs and \$770 million on diabetes-related medical costs. Without effective interventions, half of adults in Hawaii are projected to be obese by the year 2030.

Healthy vending is part of a worksite wellness program that makes changes to the work environment that can impact employee health. Worksite wellness programs have proven effective at improving the health of employees, lowering overall health care costs, reducing absenteeism,

and improving employee morale and productivity. For more information about worksite wellness, please visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/>.



Pilot Sites for *Choose Healthy Now* project:

<p>Queen Liliuokalani Building 1390 Miller Street Honolulu, HI 96813</p>
<p>Hawaii State Capitol 415 S. Beretania Street Honolulu, HI 96813</p>
<p>Downtown Post Office 335 Merchant Street Honolulu HI 96813</p>
<p>Prince Kuhio Federal Building 300 Ala Moana Boulevard Honolulu, Hawaii 96850</p>
<p>Ho'opono Center for the Blind 1901 Bachelot Street Honolulu, HI 96817</p>
<p>State Health Department Building 1250 Punchbowl Street Honolulu, HI 96813</p>
<p>Matsunaga Building - Tripler AMC 1 Jarrett White Road Honolulu, HI 96859</p>
<p>Joint Base Pearl Harbor Hickam Annex Whitmore Village, HI 96786</p>



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