



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AWARDED \$3.7 MILLION TO SUPPORT EPIDEMIOLOGICAL AND LABORATORY ACTIVITIES

HONOLULU – The Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) has been awarded \$3.7 million from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to support infectious diseases epidemiological and laboratory activities in the state. The funding is being provided through the CDC's Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity for Infectious Disease Cooperative Agreement (ELC).

In addition to funding vital ongoing infectious disease surveillance and investigation for areas such as foodborne disease, flu, and healthcare-associated infections, the ELC award will provide increased support in the area of arboviral disease (e.g., dengue, Zika, chikungunya) and critical new resources to address growing concerns presented by general antimicrobial resistance and specifically, antibiotic-resistant gonorrhea and chlamydia.

“These new funds will help in many critical areas of disease investigation, including providing support for our current Hepatitis A outbreak,” said Health Director Dr. Virginia Pressler. “We’re grateful for this recognition and generous grant from CDC, and will work to ensure that these new funds translate to sustainable efforts to protect our residents and visitors in Hawaii.”

Of the approximately \$3.7 million awarded, ELC funding will focus on areas including:

- \$1,062,000 to support Hawaii’s efforts to protect the state from Zika and other arbovirus diseases such as chikungunya and dengue. ELC funds will be used to augment

epidemiologic surveillance and investigation, enhance mosquito monitoring, and provide supplies and support to the State Laboratories Division for arbovirus testing.

- \$2,711,149 to support other ELC efforts, including: building capacity to address antimicrobial resistant gonorrhea and chlamydia concerns, increasing laboratory capacity for antimicrobial resistance detection and response infrastructure, strengthening flu surveillance and foodborne surveillance and response capacity, increasing health information systems capacity, and other ELC activities.

“The funding of this award will greatly boost our efforts to protect our community against the potential introduction of Zika virus and many other infectious diseases,” said State Epidemiologist Dr. Sarah Park. “By building our capacity to find and stop disease outbreaks we increase our ability to help save lives.”

Dr. Chris Whelen, State Laboratories Division administrator added, “We are grateful to the CDC ELC program, and very excited about expanding the role of the State Laboratories in combating drug resistant infectious diseases.”

The Department of Health’s Disease Outbreak Control, Environmental Health Services, Family Health Services, Communicable Diseases and Public Health Nursing, and State Laboratories Divisions are working jointly across the department and with partners throughout the state to assure a comprehensive Zika prevention strategy and response plan. The ELC funding in addition to grants through the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Cooperative Agreement and the Hawaii Birth Defects Surveillance, Intervention, and Follow-up for Zika Virus Grant will further support these efforts to protect public health.

Information on Zika virus can be found at the Department of Health’s Zika webpage at [http://health.hawaii.gov/docd/dib/disease/zika\\_virus/](http://health.hawaii.gov/docd/dib/disease/zika_virus/)

For more information on the ELC program, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/ncezid/dpei/epidemiology-laboratory-capacity.html>

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