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NEWS RELEASE

November 17, 2016

16-079

HAWAII CELEBRATES 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE STATE'S LANDMARK CLEAN INDOOR AIR ACT WITH PREMIERE OF SPECIAL DOCUMENTARY AND NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

Event Highlights 41ST Annual Great American Smokeout

HONOLULU – The Hawaii Department of Health and tobacco prevention advocates gathered today at the State Capital during the Great American Smokeout to celebrate Hawaii's 10 years of major accomplishments in tobacco prevention and control since the passage of the state's Clean Indoor Air Act in 2006. The celebration included the first screening of a locally-produced exclusive 10-minute documentary highlighting major changes in tobacco policies and laws in Hawaii and the unveiling of a new strategic plan for addressing tobacco use statewide.

Hawaii's Clean Air Law went into effect ten years ago today during the Great American Smokeout in 2006. Today, the 41st annual Great American Smokeout continues to be observed nationwide as a day when Americans across the country have traditionally taken the first step to living tobacco free for their health.

"We stand together with our partners in celebration of our collective efforts to successfully reduce exposure to secondhand smoke," said Health Director Dr. Virginia Pressler. "Because of their commitment and dedication, Hawaii truly is a safer, healthier place to live, work, and play."

The Clean Indoor Air Act, also known as the "Smoke Free Workplaces Law," was the first state policy designed to protect non-smokers from secondhand smoke and tobacco exposure in Hawaii. When the law passed in 2006, Hawaii was the 14th state to pass a comprehensive smoke-free law. Today, Hawaii is one of only 25 states and three U.S. territories to have a comprehensive smoke-free law, and has the third lowest smoking rate in the nation.

Since 2006, Hawaii has continued to achieve key legislative landmarks in tobacco control, by passing policies such as prohibiting the sale of electronic smoking devices

(ESDs) to minors (2013); making all state parks completely smoke-free (2015); raising the age to purchase tobacco products to age 21 (2016); restricting use of ESDs wherever smoking is already prohibited (2016); and making all Hawaii Health Systems Corporation hospitals smoke-free (2016).

“The change in smoking rates over the last decade has led to more than a 17 percent decline in the number of adults in Hawaii who smoke, meaning that there are more than 30,000 fewer smokers than there were in 2006,” explained Jessica Yamauchi, Director of the Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Hawaii. Youth initiation also dropped, from 32 percent of middle schoolers in 2001 to less than 15 percent in 2015.

However, tobacco use still remains the leading cause of chronic disease in Hawaii, and the new “Hawaii Tobacco Use Prevention and Control Strategic Plan,” calls for a special focus on priority populations with higher smoking rates. The plan also includes a new section on addressing emerging trends, such as flavored tobacco products, smoke-free multi-unit housing, smoke-free vehicles, and continuing to curb the use of ESDs. The result of Hawaii’s comprehensive tobacco prevention efforts has resulted in lower smoking rates and better health outcomes overall, but continued partnerships and resources are needed to equitably accelerate progress.

The special commemorative documentary, “The Right to be Smoke-Free: Celebrating 10 Years of Clean Air in Hawaii,” was produced by the Department of Health in collaboration with community stakeholders, experts in tobacco policy, healthcare professionals, and Hawaii residents who were affected by passage of the Clean Indoor Air Act. The video explores the significant improvements in health and the dynamic shift in social attitudes towards smoking since the passage of the historic 2006 legislation.

To download the complete strategic plan and view the documentary, please visit <http://health.hawaii.gov/tobacco/>.

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