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Crisis Line of Hawaii phone system improvements require brief downtime on Feb. 7

HONOLULU – The Hawaii Crisis Line, operated by the Hawaii State Department of Health’s Adult Mental Health Division, will be installing a new phone system on Tuesday, Feb. 7, between 11 p.m. and midnight to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the operations.

During that one-hour period, when call volumes are typically the lowest, the new phone system will be installed and tested. The Crisis Line will be unable to take incoming calls during the installation, and callers will hear a busy signal; however, alternative assistance will be available through 911 and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-808-273-8255.

“We realize how critical and lifesaving these services are to callers, so it’s important that we have an updated system that uses the latest technology to best serve the needs of our callers and staff,” said Steven Balcom, Crisis Services Coordinator for the Hawaii State Department of Health’s Adult Mental Health Division. “It will take, at most, minutes to complete the installation and operational testing required for the system to be fully functional before midnight.”

The Crisis Line of Hawaii receives an average of five to 10 calls between 11 p.m. and midnight. “While having the Crisis Line down for any amount of time is never a desirable situation, the late evening hour normally receives the lowest volume of calls,” said Balcom. “The technical staff agreed to work these late hours to keep any disruption of the service to a minimum.

The Crisis Line of Hawaii is the statewide suicide hotline and provides telephone counseling support (“warm line” services) as well as dispatching mobile crisis workers for individuals in the

community who are at high risk and need urgent assistance. Operated by the Hawaii State Department of Health Adult Mental Health Division, the crisis line answered approximately 90,000 calls last year, and provided crisis services to approximately 4,500 individuals throughout the state.

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