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**Hawaii Department of Health Receives \$3.04 Million Federal Grant
For Treatment of Adolescent Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Disorders**

HONOLULU – The Hawaii State Department of Health’s Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division (ADAD) has received a \$3.04 million grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to provide funding over four years for the treatment of adolescents and transitional aged youth with co-occurring substance abuse and mental health disorders.

The grant is designed to bring together stakeholders who serve Hawaii’s adolescents, enhance and expand treatment services and implement financial mechanisms and other reforms that improve the efficiency of substance use disorder (SUD) treatment efforts.

“We are moving towards our goal of a drug free Hawaii,” said Edward Mersereau, ADAD chief. “This grant will allow us to expand the Hawai’i Adolescent and Transitional Aged Youth Treatment Implementation project (YT-I) to increase rates of abstinence, enrollment in education, vocational training, employment and social connectedness—along with decreasing criminal and juvenile justice involvement among our youth.”

ADAD’s treatment services are designed to promote a statewide culturally appropriate, comprehensive system of services to meet the treatment and recovery needs of individuals and families. Throughout this project, ADAD will have a coordinated SUD treatment services program with the department’s Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division, Family Guidance Centers, and four drug and alcohol treatment providers.

According to a 2014 DOH report on alcohol and drug abuse treatment services in Hawaii, adolescents comprised more than half (53 percent) of the nearly 4,000 clients who received treatment by ADAD in 2014. At a six-month follow-up that same year, almost all adolescents (99 percent) who received services were attending school and the majority (61 percent) reported not abusing any substances in the 30 days prior to follow up. The vast majority of those adolescents continued to have no arrests, no hospitalizations, and no emergency room visits since discharge.

“The result of this project will be higher cross-professional training in SUD treatment practices, a more proactive approach to preventative healthcare, a concrete referral system that leaves little

room for patients to fall through the cracks, and expanded use of health information technology for better informed decision-making at the point of care,” Mersereau said. “Our goal is a statewide system of treatment that is substantially more effective in utilizing existing resources and treatment methods far beyond the life of the YT-I project.”

The Department of Health’s Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division is the primary and often sole source of public funds for substance abuse treatment in Hawaii. ADAD’s treatment efforts are designed to promote a statewide culturally appropriate, comprehensive system of services to meet the treatment and recovery needs of individuals and families. Treatment services have, as a requirement, priority admission for pregnant women and injection drug users. For more information about the division go to: <http://health.hawaii.gov/substance-abuse/>.

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