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HAWAII RANKS FIRST AS HEALTHIEST STATE IN 2014 ACCORDING TO AMERICA'S HEALTH RANKINGS

HONOLULU – Hawaii is ranked as the healthiest state according to the United Health Foundation's *2014 America's Health Rankings®: A Call to Action for Individuals & Their Communities* released today. This year is the 25th anniversary of the rankings, which provide an analysis of national health on a state-by-state basis by evaluating available data to determine national benchmarks and state rankings. During the 25 years in which the rankings were conducted, Hawaii's rank has varied from first to sixth place.

"Hawaii's top ranking reflects our state's focus on maintaining healthy lifestyles and protecting our environment," said Acting Health Director Keith Yamamoto. "The department is pleased to see Hawaii has maintained its number one spot from last year, however, the report also points out some areas of concern that we will continue to work to address."

Gov. David Y. Ige added, "This is encouraging news and I look forward to working with our public health and health care communities to ensure access to care and strengthen prevention efforts to reduce chronic disease and injury in our state. I'm proud to say that Hawaii is the healthiest state in the nation, and we must continue to invest in our public health efforts."

Highlights of Hawaii's health ranking include a low rate of adult smoking with decreases in the past two years by 21 percent (from 16.8 percent to 13.3 percent of adults). The report shows that other areas where Hawaii can improve include immunization coverage among children (rates decreased by 17 percent from 80.2 percent to 66.5 percent of children aged 19 to 35 months), and higher-than-average rates of binge drinking. Details of the determinants and outcomes that make up Hawaii's top ranking are available at

www.americashealthrankings.org.

Hawaii maintained its number one ranking from last year. It ranked second in 2012 and third in 2011. The state ranked fifth in both 2010 and 2009 and has remained among the top five healthiest states in the United Health Foundations report since 2003.

“For the last 25 years, United Health Foundation’s annual America’s Health Rankings has provided an invaluable look at the challenges and opportunities facing Hawaii and how the picture of health in our state compares with those of our region and our nation,” said Ron Fujimoto, D.O., chief medical officer, UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Hawaii. “We look forward to continuing to use the report as a key tool for identifying and implementing solutions to our most pressing challenges and measuring the strides we’ve made to date.”

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