



Ola Lokahi

Creating a Healthy Hawaii Together

JULY 2017

The mission of the Department of Health is to protect and improve the health and environment for all people in Hawaii. We believe that an optimal state of physical, mental, social and environmental well-being is a right and responsibility of all of Hawaii's people.



DOH Gains Upper Hand in Fight vs. Mosquitoes

The Hawaii Department of Health (DOH) has reached several milestones in its efforts to eliminate mosquito-borne diseases such as Zika, dengue and chikungunya in Hawaii. The announcement was made in time for National Mosquito Control Awareness Week, which was recognized from June 25 to July 1, 2017.

DOH has increased vector control staff numbers on all islands from 25 to 45 positions, conducted training on mosquito surveillance and disease response protocols and stocked up to ensure an ample supply of equipment and supplies for an effective response when the need arises.

Much of the department's efforts have centered on Hawaii Island, which now has 15 dedicated vector control staff including inspectors, technicians, specialists and entomologists.

"Adequate staff is crucial for an immediate response to all arboviral introductions, eliminating adult mosquitos and breeding sources and maintaining minimal mosquito populations via education, source reduction and larviciding," said Eric Honda, District Environmental Health Program Chief, Hawaii District Health Office.

Staff also recently attended a three-day seminar in Kona to evaluate response plans and undergo training on mosquito surveillance and abatement principals. The Hawaii Island Vector Control Program has taken the lead in developing and implementing strategies to interrupt mosquito activity and prevent development of breeding areas. Specific efforts include:

- Collaboration with Hawaii Invasive Species Council's Mamalu Poepoe project to re-examine monitoring and abatement strategies at points-of-entry (i.e. airports, harbors, etc.).
- Islandwide mosquito surveillance and mapping to identify present mosquito species and their

prevalence in order to assess the risk to nearby residents.

- Ongoing studies to predict mosquito breeding episodes based on rainfall and other environmental and seasonal influences.
- Practicing, monitoring and evaluating the impact of abatement strategies conducted in public and residential areas.

In preparation for an outbreak similar to the 2015-16 dengue epidemic that sickened 264 people, DOH has worked with city, state and federal agencies to develop the Joint Hawaii Mosquito-Borne Disease Outbreak Emergency Operations Plan, which provides guidance to state and county emergency officials prior to, during and following an mosquito-borne disease outbreak.

The Disease Outbreak Control Division (DOCD) added three staff positions to enhance disease surveillance and investigation, as well as to improve collaboration with internal partners such as the State Laboratories Division (SLD) and the Environmental Health Services Division, which houses the Vector Control Branch.

Additionally, SLD has developed its IgM testing to address Zika concerns and is establishing plaque reduction neutralization testing (PRINT), a more complex antibody testing process, for dengue and Zika. DOCD is also working with DOH's Hawaii Birth Defects Program to monitor mothers potentially affected by Zika. Data is then transmitted to a national database in the hopes of better understanding Zika infection.

Last but not least, DOH's Fight the Bite program continues to urge Hawaii residents to remain vigilant against mosquito-borne diseases. DOH is working with clinics and health centers statewide to ensure providers are trained on how to use and distribute a wide range of educational materials to patients and clients.



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SLD Program Manager Rebecca Sciulli Receives Award

The Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) recently presented its 2017 Presidential Award to **Rebecca Sciulli**, Laboratory Preparedness and Response Program Manager for the State Laboratories Division (SLD). The national award is given to individuals who have made significant contributions to APHL's work to promote policies that strengthen public health laboratories.

Rebecca accepted the award at APHL's annual Meeting and 11th Government Environmental Laboratory Conference in Providence, Rhode Island on June 13, 2017.

"It's truly an honor to be in the company of past and present Presidential awardees who have made great contributions to public health," she said. "This is something I will treasure for the rest of my life."

Rebecca began her 23-year career with the DOH as an



Rebecca and Dr. Chris Whelen pose for a photo with the 2017 APHL Presidential Award

Environmental Health Specialist temporary hire for the Solid and Hazardous Waste Branch. She thanked former and current lab directors, including Drs. **Vernon Miyamoto**, **David Horio** and **Chris Whelen** as well as her hardworking staff, for their support.

Her responsibilities include planning, directing and overseeing the activities of the Laboratory Preparedness and Response Program. Additional duties are to maintain the quality and safety of SLD's work and staff who handle unknown and high-risk pathogens, and to meet certification and accreditation requirements. Dr. Whelen described Rebecca as an extraordinary

program manager and leader.

"There's nothing she cannot implement," he said. "Rebecca has done everything from conventional laboratory methods to combat bioterrorism to advanced molecular detection of rat lungworm, Zika, and the whole genome sequencing. We're all vey happy for and proud of her."

Kaeru Services Strengthens Youth and Families

A new program in the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division (CAMHD) is helping to turn around the lives of Hawaii's youth for the better. Kaeru Services will be returning youth who reside in out-of-state residential treatment facilities back to their home communities and preventing out-of-state placement from occurring. Its efforts will focus on strengthening families, increasing community integration and normalizing life for these youth.

In September 2016, CAMHD received a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) System of Care grant totaling \$8.1 million for over four years. A recent increase in the number of youth placed out-of-state, coupled with a commitment to a family-driven approach in mental health care, led CAMHD to apply for the grant.

Kaeru Services will utilize an intensive, individualized care planning process to work with youth and families. The approach emphasizes family "voice and choice" in care and treatment planning, focuses on increasing natural supports, and utilizes flexible, non-categorical funds to support creative and out-of-the-box decision-making. The program will also wed its individualized care planning with the implementation of evidence-based treatment and the use of evidence-based practice elements.

Key partners for Kaeru Services' program implementation include EPIC 'Ohana, Inc., which will provide the meeting facilitation and youth peer support services; Child and Family Services, which will provide parent partner and behavioral health aide services; Kaeru Services' staff, initially consisting of seven grant-funded

positions housed in CAMHD's central office; and CAMHD's Family Guidance Centers. Oahu families who meet eligibility criteria will receive Kaeru Services' intensive care planning process, and the program will expand shortly thereafter to serve families statewide.

"Our young people are our most precious resource," says Kaeru Services Project Director **Pratima Kumar Musburger**. "We will ensure that they have the services and support needed to live healthy and productive lives and to fulfill their hopes and dreams."

To learn more about Kaeru Services, call (808) 733-9228 or email: pratima.musburger@doh.hawaii.gov.



Pratima Musburger

DOH Welcomes Hokule'a to Kalaupapa, Molokai

The voyaging canoe Hokule'a made a brief stopover in Kalaupapa, Molokai, where she and the crew were greeted by the Hawaii Department of Health, National Parks Services, and a small group of supporters. DOH administers the remote Kalaupapa settlement where patients with Hansen's Disease were once sent.

The welcoming ceremony, exchange of chants, community potluck and other activities were kept low-key to allow crewmembers to rest and recuperate before continuing to Oahu for the grand welcome home ceremony. Accompanying the Hokule'a were its sister canoe Hikianali'a and Tahitian cousin Fa'afaite. The Hokule'a was also joined by two other canoes while in Kalaupapa—the Okeanos from the Marshall Islands and the Mo'okiha from Maui.

At a *kawa* ceremony, Kalaupapa administrator Kenneth Seamon welcomed the Polynesian Voyaging Society and crew members of Hōkūle'a, Hikianali'a and Fa'afaite.

"We know you must be eager to return home to your families and friends after your long and inspirational journey of learning and sharing the Mālama Honua message around the world," he said. "We hope that your stay here with us in this hallowed place will allow you time to rest, reconnect, and prepare for the

final leg of your historic voyage."

Miki'ala Pescaia, Interpretive Park Ranger for Kalaupapa National Historical Park, said protocols were kept simple at the request of the Polynesian Voyaging Society.

"It was just enough to pay honor and respect to Kalaupapa and its history and people, but not so much that it triggered pre-Oahu welcome home festivities," she said. Hokule'a needed a breather and Kalaupapa provided the safest place for her to do that."

EPIC VOYAGE

Hokule'a returned from a three-year long voyage circumnavigating the globe and spreading the message of *Mālama Honua* (caring for Island Earth) by promoting environmental consciousness, fostering learning environments, bringing together island communities and growing a global movement toward a more sustainable world.

Upon returning to Hawaiian waters, the canoe visited Kalaupapa, Kaho'olawe and Kualoa—places considered special and sacred. Kalaupapa was the first port that Hokule'a anchored at during the return leg of her 1976 maiden voyage from Tahiti to Hawaii. Hokule'a has since returned to Kalaupapa at the end of previous voyages. This recent voyage, which was launched in May 2014, started with a visit to Kalaupapa.

Strategic Plan Videos Available For Viewing

The Department of Health is preparing to update its 2015-2018 Strategic Plan entitled "Make Health Hawaii's Shared Value." In keeping with Gov. David Ige's vision for the State, the Strategic Plan creates a culture of health throughout Hawaii by investing in healthy babies and families, better mental health and telehealth.

"Creating a culture of health means that health and wellness is everyone's *kuleana*," said DOH Director Dr. Virginia Pressler. "Everyone needs to take health and wellness seriously and make it a part of their agenda." To that end, DOH has prepared several short videos updating the department's progress in meeting its priorities. The videos can be viewed by clicking on each title.

- ❖ ["Health is Everyone's Kuleana"](#)
- ❖ ["Hawaii's Keiki Deserve the Best"](#)
- ❖ ["Reconnecting the Mind & Body"](#)
- ❖ ["Using Technology to Improve Access to Care"](#)

Viewers are asked to provide their input in a brief survey [here](#). Feedback will be invaluable as the department updates its strategic plan for the next four years and beyond.

DWSRF Program Meets Targets For FY 2017

The DOH Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) Program exceeded funding requirements by disbursing more than \$50.3 million of loan funds in State Fiscal Year 2017 to support infrastructure improvements in public water systems across Hawaii. The program successfully met the target of \$44.3 million in total disbursements approved last year by federal officials. In addition, the department executed loan agreements to provide funding totaling more than \$46.8 million, exceeding the \$38.8 million target.

Joanna Seto, Safe Drinking Water Branch Chief said, "We continue to communicate regularly with the County water departments to discuss upcoming capital improvement projects which can be included in future Programmatic Financing Loans and estimated disbursement schedules for projects which already have loans. We're also expanding our DWSRF customer base to include loans to privately-owned Public Water Systems in State Fiscal Year 2019. This will be a small but extremely important portion of our loan program to provide funds for other water system improvements around the State.

"Mahalo to our County water department partners for their diligence in submitting their payment requests and routing the loan agreements for signatures. Mahalo also to our DOH DWSRF, CWSRF and ASO teams for processing these documents expeditiously while also validating the new Loans & Grants Tracking System."

Each year, Congress appropriates funds administered by the EPA to provide grants to states for low-interest loan programs for public water system infrastructure improvements. By meeting these targets, the DWSRF is positioned to receive the entire EPA capitalization grant award for State Fiscal Year 2018.