



May 2016

Ola Lokahi

Creating a Healthy Hawaii Together

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.

Public Health Nursing: Big Tasks that Require Big Hearts

This month, healthcare organizations celebrated National Nurses Week from May 6 to 12. The Hawaii Department of Health is proud of all of its nurses, and will be highlighting their contributions to the community throughout the year, starting this month with our public health nurses.

The vision of our public health nurses is to bring health equity to all people in all communities. A big task that requires big hearts.

Enriching the Health of All

Their mission is to enhance and enrich the health and life of all people. Forming mutually respectful, trusting relationships is paramount to their success as public health nurses. They are effective because they start by simply listening to communities to assess what they need. This provides insights on how to best respond, and the public health nurses then combine their clinical knowledge with what they have learned from individuals, families, and communities.

Public health nurses derive satisfaction from creating sustainable, systemic change – something that

nurses who work in acute settings do not always get to experience. They have the opportunity to witness people's lives changed by merging best practices in nursing, social and public health to address the root cause of poor health and chronic conditions.

Joan Takamori, APRN, Chief of the Public Health Nursing Branch, leads this important area. Statewide, there are 112 public health nurses who, each in their own way, serve as a bridge to those who are often forgotten or marginalized, connecting them to health and wellness. The public health nurses in the Department of Health are organized into 11 geographic regions to tackle health challenges in East Honolulu, West Honolulu, Windward, Central Oahu, Leeward Oahu, East Hawaii, West Hawaii, Kauai, Maui, Molokai, and Lanai.

Preparing for Disasters

They help people prepare for and respond to natural disasters and public health emergencies, working with high-risk communities such as the homeless who live at Kea`au Beach, those in public housing in

Palolo, or those in rural areas such as the Waianae Coast, North Shore, or Pahoehoe.

Community Collaboration

They help bring people together for the common good. In the Nanakuli-Waianae community, public health nurses participated in a collaborative effort involving churches, the Hawaii Air National Guard, American Red Cross, State Civil Defense, Hawaiian Humane Society, and the City & County of Honolulu's Department of Emergency Management to prepare for disasters since there is only one road in and out of the community. It was an example of teamwork in action.

You'll find public health nurses helping to prevent and treat the spread of communicable diseases through immunization clinics for the uninsured or at "Stop the Flu at School" programs or satellite TB clinics.

They also promote and facilitate healthy lifestyles and disease prevention across the lifespan in target populations to address

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Public Health Nurse Veteran Lily Ochoco:

There's Always Room to Learn More

When it comes to public health, the more things change, the more they stay the same. **Lily Ochoco**, a 50-year veteran of the Hawaii Department of Health, has that vantage point.

Many years ago, women who were pregnant and exposed to Rubella may have given birth to a child with Rubella Syndrome. The child may have been cognitively impaired, blind, deaf, have a cardiac problem. The Rubella vaccine eliminated that issue. Today, we have the Zika virus that may cause microcephaly in a newborn if a woman contracts the disease during her pregnancy.

Nationally, the goal was to eliminate tuberculosis by 1960. Lily started work with Tuberculosis Branch and TB is still with us today.

Public health nurses have always been involved with those less able to access care.

50-Year Veteran

These are some of the observations of Lily, who now serves a section supervisor in the Public Health Nursing Branch. Currently, she oversees the area from Nuuanu to Chinatown, over to the gates of Fort Shafter. The catchment area has a high concentration of low-income housing. Lily said she didn't expect to stay that long, but she has met many who want to learn, who want to grow, who want to help others be healthy, too.

She has had a front-row seat in witnessing public health evolve and



Lily Ochoco, right, listens to public health nurse colleague Willa Donnelly's presentation on managing head lice or uku.

the needs of people change through the years, but says the commitment of public health nurses to deliver a personalized message of hope with hands-on care, especially to those who may not have access to quality care, has remained the same.

Walking Through Life with Others

"Some people don't have the time or energy to focus on their health. Sometimes they are overwhelmed, sometimes depressed. Sometimes they lack personal or financial resources. Sometimes there is a clash in expectations. Public health nurses walk through life with them," Lily said.

When Lily began her career with the Hawaii State Department of Health in the Tuberculosis Branch, people

would spend at least a year in the hospital if their x-ray indicated they had active TB. Today, once a person is established on treatment life can continue at home, at work and at play.

Population Health

In addition to focusing on injury prevention and infection control, public health nurses place a strong emphasis on supporting individuals, families and communities to not only manage chronic conditions, but also prevent them and better yet, promote health.

Promoting health is not just about giving information and instructions. Lily said **Myron "Pinky" Thompson**, an advocate for better health for

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high-risk communities with multiple health disparities. They also help prevent obesity in high-risk schools, and initiate health and wellness projects in public housing.

Collaborative Partnerships

Many of these are the result of collaborative partnerships with other Department of Health programs such as Chronic Disease Prevention, Family Health Services, Dental Services, Hansen's Disease, Tuberculosis Control, STD/AIDS Prevention, and Immunization.

They also work with other agencies such as the University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture, John A. Burns School of Medicine 5-2-1-0 Program, and the Hawaii Public Health Institute.

Individualized Care

In addition to working with the entire community, public health nurses are also adept at providing individualized, one-to-one care. Public health nurses visit homes to provide care to everyone from keiki to kupuna, providing case management services for complex health needs for infants and children as well as frail, vulnerable elders who may be living alone or with a struggling family caregiver.

Their goal is to connect or reconnect these individuals to services or determine how the public health nurses can continue to support them in their homes

Wherever there is a need in our islands, you can count on the

Department of Health's public health nurses to be there!

Public Health Nurse Veteran Lily Ochoco:

Always Room to Learn More

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Native Hawaiians, had a motto: "Health is how you live your life." "How one lives life involves the physical environment, the social environment, the people we care about and who care about us, the resources available, the policies, and the laws in place," Lily said.

Lily recalls a situation in which a public health nurse, a school health aide and University of Hawaii students assisted a school that had 79 students stay at home from school in one week because of uku. This team asked the children how they felt about uku in their lives. The children were involved by helping each other and rap, "It's cool to be in school." That school was pleased to see a few days when no child stayed home because of uku.

Self-Actualization

Lily points to Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs to explain her enlightened views of health: "Health comes from self-actualization – a connection to the inner spirit that goes beyond food, shelter and clothing."

As an example, she said decades ago, the City and County attempted to address homelessness by creating a tent city, offering housing, meals and services at no cost.

"The families continued to get their supplemental income. However, three months later, six months later, even nine months later many individuals continued not to have the resources available to pay for shelter, food or other necessities. Some, however, were able to use the time to strengthen themselves and accumulate what they needed to move their lives toward stability," Lily said.

Building Resilience

"Situations in our lives give us the opportunity to tap our internal and external resources or to learn new ways to go forward. Sometimes instead we fall on habits that allow us to pause in life, but can also hold us back. We continue to search for what holds some people back and what supports others to grow," Lily continued.

After years of working with those from Micronesia, Samoa, Tonga, Vietnam, Laos, and the Philippines, Lily has a deep respect and reverence for the culture and values of others. While it may be easy to become jaded, Lily has remained compassionate and filled with wonder.

Learning from Others

"People who live tough lives know best what can work for them. We can support them in their problem solving. But we can learn from them too."

Willa Donnelly, the “Uku Queen,” Helps Others Reign



Willa Donnelly, BSN, RN, APHN, a public health nurse with the Department of Health for the past 24

years, is affectionately known as the “Uku Queen.” It’s a distinction for which she should be proud.

She has been able to go into schools and help kids and their families from different cultures successfully eradicate ukus from their hair. It’s a pesky problem, especially since some cultures welcome ukus as a sign of beauty and not something to eliminate. She covers schools in the area ewa of Nuuanu Avenue to Fort Shafter, and down to Chinatown and Sand Island. Although it is one of the smallest geographical regions covered by the public health nurses, it has one of highest concentrations of low-income residents.

Overcoming Barriers

Taking care of ukus comes with unique challenges. When a child has ukus, some may see this as a medical reason to skip school, and they end of falling behind in their classes. That promoted Willa to create a “It’s Cool to be in School” campaign specifically to address this issue.

If written instructions are provided to parents on how to mix certain types of shampoo with Listerine brand mouthwash, some parents may not be able to understand

English or read instructions in their own language.

“Public health nursing requires you to always be thinking,” Willa said. “It’s emotionally taxing.”

But Willa loves every moment of her work as a public health nurse.

Inspiring Others to Take Charge of Their Health

Willa said public health nursing inspires self-help and peer-to-peer support. She was once putting up “Stop the Flu in School” posters in a school cafeteria to encourage immunizations when she heard scratching noises coming from the back. It was a group of boys creating their own music using forks and other tools. She challenged them to create a rap to let me students know the value of flu shots. The result? It was one of the best turn outs with 100% students receiving their shots.

It’s About Relationships

A key component of success in public health nursing is establishing and maintaining deep relationships with the families. It is important that the nurses show they are members of the community. It helps that Willa’s mom was a teacher at Lanakila Elementary School and grew up in the area.

“It breaks my heart to read about those whom I’ve helped in the news,” Willa said, a sign that the relationships she forms are based on genuine caring, with each person seen as much more than a patient, but as part of a family.

Extensive Acute Care Experience

Before becoming a public health nurse, Willa had extensive acute care experience. After earning a bachelor’s degree in nursing from the University of Hawaii-Manoa, Willa headed for the University of Chicago’s hospital because at time, hospitals in Hawaii were not hiring nurses. “My father pointed out he had not sent me to school to work at Liberty House,” she recalls.

At the University of Chicago, she served in the operating room and later at Baltimore City Hospital gained experience in the intensive care unit and emergency room. Her hospital experience also included time with St. Francis Medical Center’s operating room. Back in Hawaii, she received a master’s degree in advanced public health nursing at the UH.

She joined the Department of Health in public health nursing in 1992, shortly before Hurricane Iniki devastated Kauai.

“You get to see immediate response and see patients get better, during surgery or during their recovery,” said Willa, noting that it required a shift in her thinking as a public health nurse. “Sometimes it takes a lifetime to see change. We have to ask, ‘What more can we do?’ It’s not just changing an individual that is rewarding, but the health of an entire population, a school population. I get to use child development tools to improve their health.”

It Takes a Village...to Restore a Village

"People don't care how much you know until they first know how much you care." That adage certainly holds true when it comes to public health, especially in Hawaii, where relationships are so critical.

Although public health nurses are well educated and possess a great deal of knowledge on how to care for those in need, that wealth of information may never be used if people do not welcome them into their lives to receive the care they need.

That's why **Joan Takamori, RN, MSN**, Chief of the Public Health Nursing Branch for the Hawaii State Department of Health, and her team of public health nurses and other staff believe it's imperative that public health nurses listen to the needs of every community statewide and respond with clinical knowledge.

Just as important, they continually seek to build trusting relationships with individuals, families, and entire communities.

Combatting Dengue Fever

The combination of these components was evident during the recent Dengue fever outbreak on Hawaii Island. In November 2015, the Department of Health, in collaboration with State Civil Defense, identified Miloli'i, a small, isolated coastal village of about 40 homes located 38 miles from Kailua-Kona, as a hot spot for Dengue fever-carrying aegypti mosquitoes.



Jasmine Staup, RN, BSN, a public health nurse supervisor in West Hawaii helped to control Dengue fever at Miloli'i.

The lifestyle choices of those living in the area was impacting their health. With no access to county water supply, each house collects rain water in catchment tanks -- the ideal breeding ground for mosquitoes.

The emergency response plan called for safely treating catchment tanks to control the mosquitos to prevent the spread of the disease. However, there remained one major obstacle: the families of Miloli'i were reluctant to let "outsiders" into their village.

While it may have been tempting to write this community off and give up on them, the Public Health Nursing Branch's vision of health eq-

uity for all people in all communities reminded the public health nursing team to never gave up.

"Of the People"

Jasmine Staup, RN, BSN, who leads the public health nursing office in West Hawaii, shared her concerns with her daughter, **Kassidy Staup**, who is a third-grade teacher at Ho'okena Elementary School, which serves Miloli'i. Coincidentally, Kassidy's educational assistant, **Carol Kahele** a respected kupuna in Miloli'i helped the village to see the benefits of working with the Department of Health.

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It Takes a Village...to Restore a Village

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Carol saw the effects of Dengue fever firsthand. She is the grandmother of one Cassidy's previous students, **Taha'a Kahele**, who became a victim of Dengue fever and subsequently recovered.

All of those precious connections opened the door to better health for the families residing in Miloli'i. By December, the Department of Health was able to treat the catchment tanks and further control the mosquitos.

"Ho'okena students would see me driving in the area in a Department of Health vehicle and I would hear them say, 'That's Miss Staup's mom,'" Jasmine laughed. "They understood we grew up here on the island and were of the people."

That sense of oneness opened the door even further.

Respecting Miloli'i Residents

"One evening while still working with those in the village, I was invited to up to the lanai of one of the Miloli'i residents to enjoy the breeze and talk story. I was honored to be invited. I got to see their life and their priceless views, and in that moment understood why they are so protective of their village."

This will be a landmark case study in collaboration and team-building that underscore the importance of relationships. The public health nurses hope to continue to build



Top photo: Kenneth Gonzales, Public Health Nurse with the Hawaii Department of Health; Taha'a Kahele and his grandmother, Carol Kahele.

Bottom photo: Taha'a Kahele next to sign announcing re-opening of Miloli'i Beach Park.

strong, lasting relationships with other communities to gain provide access to better health care for all of Hawaii's people.

Hawaii Department of Health Partners with CVS Minute Clinics and Hep Free Hawaii to Offer Simple Hepatitis C Tests

Hawaii's kupuna -- baby boomers between the ages of 51 and 71 -- are among those most at risk for hepatitis C, which can lead to liver disease or liver cancer.

The Hawaii State Department of Health is partnering with CVS Minute Clinics and Hep Free Hawaii to protect kupuna and others by offering convenient hepatitis C point-of-care testing. The tests begins on May 19, 2016, which is National Hepatitis Testing Day.

Convenient Testing Sites

All nine CVS Minute Clinics, located within selected Longs Drugs stores on Oahu, will offer a finger-prick test (instead of a blood draw) to check for hepatitis C in persons at risk, especially baby boomers born between 1945 and 1965.

Results from the rapid hepatitis C antibody test are available in 20 minutes. This preventive health service is fully covered by most insurance plans with no out-of-pocket costs for members.

Hepatitis C and Liver Cancer

Hawaii is the state with the highest rate of liver cancer in the U.S., and the majority of liver cancer cases in Hawaii are caused by viral hepatitis types B and C. An estimated 23,000 persons in Hawaii are currently living with chronic hepatitis C, which can lead to liver disease and cancer.

minute clinic[®]
the medical clinic in CVS/pharmacy[®]

Hepatitis C is spread by blood-to-blood exposure (such as sharing injection equipment), but there are also high rates among baby boomers (born 1945-1965), regardless of any known blood exposure. More than one out of four people in Hawaii are baby boomers and should be tested at least once for hepatitis C infection.

Early Detection is Critical

"Most people with hepatitis C don't know that they have it," stated **Thaddeus Pham**, Viral Hepatitis Prevention Coordinator with the Hawaii State Department of Health. "If undetected, hepatitis C can lead to liver disease, liver cancer, or even death. Since hepatitis C is manageable and, in some cases, even curable, people can prevent liver cancer through early detection. We encourage all baby boomers, as well as other Hawaii residents at risk for hepatitis C, to get tested right away. Getting tested is the first step in liver cancer prevention."

CVS Minute Clinics are staffed by nurse practitioners who not only can administer the test, but also offer other services such as immunizations and non-urgent medical care.

They are also committed to ensuring the patients get connected back their primary care providers. The CVS Minute Clinics are currently at nine select locations on Oahu. See <http://www.cvs.com/minuteclinic/clinics/Hawaii> for exact locations and times.

Appointments are first come, first serve, although you can hold a place in line using the Minute Clinic location website.

Partnering with the Community

"We're partnering with local CVS Minute Clinics because we recognize the increasing importance of non-traditional healthcare delivery models," Thaddeus said.

"Many of us often go to our local pharmacy or drug store more often than we go to our doctor. It's important to use every opportunity to increase awareness and screening for our ohana. Ultimately, it doesn't matter where you go, as long as you get tested to prevent liver disease and cancer," he added.

For list of participating sites, go to <http://www.cvs.com/minuteclinic/clinics/Hawaii> or www.hepfreehawaii.org.

Hawaii State Hospital Receives Green Light to Move Forward! Legislature Approves \$160.5 Million For New Forensic Facility



construction timeline, which includes the RFP process that begins now and continues through May 2017.

In the meantime, the demolition crew has now completed 85% of the original abatement and demolition

contract, and they are continuing to press ahead. As the abatement process continues, more materials, such as ceiling tiles, flooring material in the library, and insulation in the boiler room, are being safely removed from the interior of the Goddard Building

Thanks to our legislators who understand the critical need for Hawaii State Hospital to address the ongoing challenge of overcrowded patient conditions, we have been allocated the entire amount of \$160.5 million to construct our new, 144-bed forensic facility to replace the Goddard Building.

This is great news for our patients, employees, and the community. The overcrowded conditions at our hospital has had an adverse impact on patients, employees and the surrounding community.

As noted in the updated master plan for the Kaneohe campus, time is of the essence for a new, high-security forensic facility that can accommodate the ever-increasing referrals of forensic patients from the court system, now and into the future.

Preparation of a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the construction of the new 144-bed forensic facility to replace the Goddard Building was contingent upon the release of appropriated funds. The DAGS team has already mobilized into action. They have mapped out a detailed

Bishop Building Demolition Process Also Moving Ahead



There is positive news for the lower end of the Hawaii State Hospital campus, too. Avalon Health Care Group is moving forward to meet State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD) requirements and to complete an ongoing site review. SHPD is part of the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources.

Avalon has already accomplished three major milestones: archeological trenching, traffic assessment and soil analysis. The findings from the archeological trenching along with other related studies will be submitted to SHPD. The soil testing and a traffic data analysis will be compiled in a final report along with other site review studies.