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Hawai'i State Hospital Administrator William May plans to leave his post in early May; national search now underway for successor

HONOLULU — William May, who joined Hawai'i State Hospital in July 2014, will leave his post in early May to coincide with the end of the legislative session, announced Dr. Bruce Anderson, state health director.

“Despite the growing census at the hospital, Bill has successfully led the hospital team to continually improve the quality of care for patients, working conditions for employees, and safety for the surrounding Kaneohe neighborhood,” Dr. Anderson said. “Bill was always willing to share his expertise with the hospital team, the Department of Health, and the community. It has been a tremendous, 24/7 commitment and we wish Bill all the best as he spends more time with his family.”

In January 2018, May's leadership was validated with Hawai'i State Hospital earning two comprehensive, three-year accreditations from The Joint Commission, a healthcare accreditation organization, for compliance with performance standards to ensure safe, effective patient care in 2014 and again in 2017.

May was also instrumental in advancing Hawai'i State Hospital's master plan, which includes the design and construction of a new \$160 million, four-story, 144-bed forensic patient facility to replace an aging, 70-year-old building. Grading of the site was completed in December 2018 and construction of the building is expected to start this summer. Construction is targeted for completion in late 2020 and should be ready for staff and patients in May 2021.

The new facility incorporates clinical best practices in a modern, therapeutic environment, and will feature patient care units, a comprehensive rehabilitation mall, outdoor courtyards, admissions and transfer suites, building support functions, and office space. The design of the facility was modeled after the Colorado Mental Health Institute at Pueblo, a 451-bed psychiatric hospital, where May previously served as superintendent before joining Hawai'i State Hospital. Under his leadership, the Pueblo Institute was recognized by the Colorado Department of Human Services for significant performance improvement.

May, who holds a master of public administration degree from Rutgers University, also served in chief executive officer positions in New Jersey at Trenton Psychiatric Hospital, Ewing Residential Treatment Center, and the Woodbridge Developmental Center.

“We recognize that finding a professional of Bill’s caliber to continue the positive momentum that he began at Hawai’i State Hospital may take some time, so we have launched a national search now to find the right candidates for a smooth leadership transition,” said Edward Mersereau, deputy director of behavioral health, who oversees the hospital.

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