



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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Hawai'i Department of Health awarded \$4 million in additional federal grant funds for opioid crisis prevention and treatment

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) has received an additional \$4,036,648 in federal grant funds to continue its efforts to effectively address and prevent the Opioid Crisis in Hawai'i.

A total of \$1.8 billion was released to states earlier this month by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to continue efforts to combat the opioid crisis by expanding access to treatment and supporting near real-time data on the drug overdose crisis. This includes \$932 million through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration as part of the State Opioid Response grants.

“The additional funding for these efforts allows us to continue our innovative efforts and approaches toward addressing opioid and other substance use issues in our state,” said Edward Mersereau, deputy director for Behavioral Health. “This funding will help expand access, reduce stigma and improve the overall system of care for substance use disorders in Hawai'i.”

The funding will also be used to support the continued efforts of the Hawai'i Opioid Initiative, a collaborative statewide effort by the Department of Health. The initiative brings together partners such as the Department of the Attorney General, Department of Human Services Med-QUEST Division, Department of Public Safety Narcotics Enforcement Division, the county police departments, and numerous other community groups in coordinated efforts that have helped keep Hawai'i relatively unscathed by the national opioid crisis.

Action areas identified in the State's Opioid Initiative Plan include:

- Improving and modernizing healthcare strategies and access to opioid and other substance misuse treatment and recovery services;
- Improving prescribing practices among healthcare providers and health insurance companies for opioid and other potentially addictive medications;

- Improving systemwide routine data collection and dissemination to inform decision-making and determine best practices;
- Improving community-based programs and public education to prevent opioid misuse, such as the Hawai'i Medication Drop Box Program that was launched in July 2018 as a result of the support of the Department of the Attorney General, Department of Public Safety, the Drug Enforcement Administration, and the Hawai'i, Maui, and Kaua'i Police Departments;
- Increasing consumer education and prescription harm management through pharmacy-based strategies; and
- Supporting law enforcement and first responders by providing specialized training and ensuring effective laws and policies. This includes the use of Naloxone to reduce the incidence of opioid deaths due to overdose.

“Hawai'i's initiative aligns with HHS's five-point strategy for combating the national opioid crisis,” said Ed Heidig, regional director of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. “These efforts are resulting in the first drop in overdose deaths in more than two decades, more Americans are getting treatment for addiction and we are dealing with addiction in new and innovative, evidence-based ways.”

About the Hawai'i Opioid Initiative

The Hawai'i Opioid Initiative action plan is a comprehensive strategy to aggressively counteract the abuse and misuse of opioids in Hawai'i. The plan is designed to sustain a systemwide, coordinated and proactive response to not only opioids, but also methamphetamine and other drugs. The collaborative effort is led by the Hawai'i Department of Health, together with the Department of the Attorney General, Department of Human Services Med-QUEST Division, Department of Public Safety Narcotics Enforcement Division and other community groups. For details on the six focus areas in the Hawai'i Opioid Initiative action plan, visit hawaiiopioid.org.

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