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Hawai'i Department of Health, City & County of Honolulu Emergency Services Department announce a new emergency medical care treatment site option for O'ahu emergency patients

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) and the City and County of Honolulu Emergency Services Department (HESD) in partnership with Hawai'i Pacific Health are announcing the start of a new program to provide alternate emergency care treatment site options for O'ahu residents and visitors in Kapolei. Beginning this week, Kapolei patients have the option of being transported to selected urgent care facilities rather than a hospital emergency department. This will ensure O'ahu residents have faster access to appropriate medical care, including emergency care.

This emergency care option was authorized by the 2019 Hawai'i State Legislature's Act 140. The law was passed to enhance and expand emergency medical services and patient healthcare options. The first alternative emergency care site to be offered will be the Straub Kapolei Clinic and Urgent Care Center located at the Ka Makana Ali'i Mall. Physicians from the three organizations carefully developed the guidelines for this project.

"Hospital-based emergency care may not be the most appropriate level of care required to treat a patient. Alternative care options allow us to work collaboratively to determine how to best manage emergency care resources in our communities," said **Dr. Alvin Bronstein**, who serves as chief of the health department's Emergency Medical Services and Injury Prevention System Branch. "The program seeks to provide the appropriate care that meets the needs of the individual based on agreement between the healthcare experts and the patient."

In responding to 911 calls for medical emergencies, the City and County of Honolulu EMS personnel will assess a patient's condition and determine if the patient's condition meets indications appropriate for an alternative destination. The patient will be provided the option to decide. The first alternative care site at Straub Kapolei Clinic and Urgent Care will operate Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

"The goal for EMS is to have patients transported to the proper facility so that they will receive the appropriate level of care," said **Dr. James Ireland**, who serves as the HESD director.

“Alternative care sites can potentially decrease emergency room overcrowding and benefit EMS with shorter transport times which result in putting 911 ambulances back in service sooner.”

“We are pleased to be invited to join this innovative partnership with the state and county to collaborate on this new care approach for urgent issues to better serve our community,” said **Dr. Leslie Chun**, CEO of Hawai'i Pacific Health Medical Group. “Our mission of creating a healthier Hawai'i really aligns with this initiative because it allows us to help address our patients' physical, mental and financial health. By providing more options for our community, we move closer to our goal of delivering the right care in the right place at the right time.”

Both HESD and DOH plan to expand the program to other selected alternative care sites throughout O'ahu and Neighbor Islands. Other alternative sites are being identified and may be ready by the end of this year.

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