



## **DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

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### **DOH, WCC honor first graduates of mental health technician certificate program**

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) and Windward Community College (WCC) recognized two graduates of a new certificate program to grow Hawai'i's mental healthcare workforce. Cristine Lucas, who works at the Hawai'i State Hospital, and Jacqueline Turner, who works for the State Operated Special Residential Programs (SOSRP), both completed the Mental Health Technician Certificate of Competence program in the Spring 2022 semester.

“Congratulations to Jacqueline and Cristine—and to all in the community who came together to create this certificate program,” said Health Director Dr. Elizabeth Char, FACEP. “Innovative partnerships like this one will allow us to continue to grow our workforce and ensure that healthcare workers like Jacqueline and Cristine have opportunities to advance in their careers.”

“When Senator Keohokalole brought Dr. Heidelberg and myself together to discuss how we might build an educational pathway for the State Hospital, it was an opportunity to support our institutions, our employees, and care for mental illness in Hawai'i,” said WCC Chancellor Dr. Ardis Eschenberg. “These first graduates are our hope for increased quality of care and expanded career opportunities in mental health for community members. I look forward to seeing this program and its impact grow.”

The nine-credit program prepares students to work as assistants to mental health professionals in institutional settings, such as the Hawai'i State Hospital, as well in community-based settings such as SOSRP. The program was created following discussion between DOH, WCC, and community leaders on how the community could collaborate to meet workforce needs. Trained mental health technicians are in demand locally for jobs at a number of healthcare organizations, including DOH.

The certificate program is being offered free of charge in the Fall 2022 semester. Interested students can learn more at <https://windward.hawaii.edu/programs-of-study/mental-health-technician/>.



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*Left to right: Graduates Jacqueline Turner and Cristine Lucas*



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*DOH, WCC, and community leaders celebrate the first Mental Health Technician Certificate of Competence graduates*

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