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**Department of Health announces plans to improve
safety and care at Hawai'i State Hospital facilities**

HONOLULU – Following the tragic death of a staff member on Nov. 13, 2023, the Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) conducted a full safety and security review of the State Operated Specialized Residential Program (SOSRP) and Hawai'i State Hospital (HSH) facilities. With input from SOSRP and HSH staff, DOH took immediate action to tighten security and increase staff-to-patient ratios.

Immediate actions that were implemented include the following:

- All SOSRP residents are now subject to screening (pat search, metal detector wand, and urine drug screen) upon their return from being off the SOSRP grounds.
- Security patrols around the SOSRP were increased.
- Staff-to-patient ratio was increased from 1:5 to 1:3.

In addition, a four-day safety stand-down was instituted for both the SOSRP and the HSH to review existing policies and procedures and recommend improvements to overall safety. These recommendations and improvements aim to create a safer and more secure environment within the hospital, prioritize patient care, and mitigate potential risks or issues that could compromise the safety and well-being of patients and staff members.

Specific recommendations include:

- Organizational Structure Changes:

- Have the HSH report directly to the DOH Deputy Director of Behavioral Health.
- Establish an Assistant Administrator for Safety and Operations, whose responsibilities include oversight of safety and security, reporting directly to the HSH Administrator.
- Establish a standing Safety and Security Committee chaired by the Assistant Administrator of Safety and Operations.
- Operations and Facility Improvements:
 - Increase and enhance contracted security personnel including a rapid response team.
 - Relocate the guard shack lower on campus with a barrier across the street.
 - Repair and add cameras able to be remotely monitored.
 - Integrate the three public-address (PA) systems on the HSH grounds.
- State Hospital Census Reduction:
 - Increase service provider rates to encourage the expansion of services available to at-risk individuals.
 - Increase the number of community-based group homes.
 - Increase the number of Certified Court Examiners.

Download the full report at health.hawaii.gov or by clicking [here](#).

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