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**DOH OPENS BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CRISIS CENTER IN IWILEI**

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HONOLULU — Governor Josh Green, M.D., Hawai'i Supreme Court Chief Justice Mark E. Recktenwald, City and County of Honolulu Mayor Rick Blangiardi, the Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH) Adult Mental Health Division, CARE Hawaii, the Hawai'i Community Foundation and members of the community gathered today to bless the state's new Behavioral Health Crisis Center (BHCC) at the Iwilei Resource Center (IRC). BHCC will provide individuals, including those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, with short-term, sub-acute crisis services and will provide a welcoming, supportive environment that can lead to crisis stabilization and linkages to other community resources. DOH hopes to expand the concept to other locations in coming years. The Governor plans to expand crisis centers and increase crisis care capacities statewide.

"I have witnessed and helped treat mothers, children and men in mental health crisis, time and time again in the emergency room. Many of these individuals are homeless, but not all," said Governor Green. "The BHCC offers people crisis care tailored to their individual needs. The center fills a critical gap in the crisis care continuum, provides an opportunity to deflect individuals from arrest into care, decreases the burden on community emergency departments, and promises to save taxpayer money."

"I'm really proud of this moment because this building is set up to do a lot of good for people who really are in deep need. And it is only part of a solution," said Honolulu Mayor Rick Blangiardi. "There's a lot on the horizon (for the city). We are almost there in

really making a significant difference, a lot of it has to do with the collaboration with the state.”

“Crisis services are part of a continuum of care. This crisis center is meant to be an entry point for further stabilization and treatment,” said Dr. Kenneth Fink, DOH director. “Mental health and homelessness are a shared priority of the Governor and the mayor. Without their commitment to those topics, we wouldn’t be here today. The hope is that with ongoing services, we can reduce the need for crisis services and keep people stable. This is just a very important piece that was missing, but it is part of a larger system of care that we’re actively working to continue to develop.”

The new facility is the first of its kind in the state and will enable DOH to provide crisis care in a safe, nurturing space. BHCC aims to minimize the amount of time spent by law enforcement to assist and transport those in crisis, and reduce the use of hospital emergency rooms. BHCC will provide initial triage and opportunity for longer stabilization and treatment. In the near future, BHCC will be able to accept involuntary patients brought in by law enforcement.

“A lot of the folks who benefit from coming to this facility have had more than their share of life adversities. Sometimes traditional arenas for people to get care are not the best for these people. A place like this is intentional and offers trauma-informed care,” said DOH Crisis Continuum and Medicaid Services Medical Director, Dr. Chad Koyanagi.. “This model of care means to create a place where it’s like a living room, where people feel comfortable.”

CARE Hawaii is the contracted operator of the facility, working under the guidance of the DOH Adult Mental Health Division. The observation unit will be staffed with a licensed psychiatrist or advanced practice registered nurse (APRN), registered nurse (RN), qualified mental health professional, case manager, behavioral health technician, certified peer specialist, housekeeping staff and security. The stabilization section will be staffed with a case manager, RN, behavioral health technician, program coordinator, and peer specialist. At full capacity, the BHCC can accommodate 16 individuals in initial crisis, with an additional nine stabilization beds.

The BHCC will cost approximately \$6.7 million per year to operate.

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