



STATE OF HAWAI'I
KA MOKU 'ĀINA O HAWAI'I

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO

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**CAMHD AWARDED \$11.99 MILLION GRANT TO IMPROVE
CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES STATEWIDE**

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HONOLULU — The Hawai'i Department of Health's Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division (CAMHD) has been awarded an \$11.99 million system of care improvement grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The four-year grant, titled "Workforce Activities in Action (WA'A): Building Capacity for CAMHD's Youth Through Equity," began Sept. 30, 2024.

WA'A focuses on enhancing existing CAMHD initiatives and introducing new strategies to improve mental health services for Hawai'i's youth. Through its various objectives, including strengthening behavioral health workforce capacity and quality, and increasing access to culturally appropriate and evidence-informed supports, WA'A will support CAMHD's mission of providing access to quality mental health services for Hawai'i's children and families.

The U.S. is experiencing a youth mental health crisis that disproportionately affects minority and disadvantaged populations. Such patterns are particularly true for Hawai'i youth who continue to experience stressors secondary to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Maui

wildfire disaster. At the same time, Hawai'i is experiencing significant behavioral health workforce shortages.

“This grant represents a crucial opportunity to strengthen mental health services for children and adolescents across the state,” said T. Keli Acquaro, administrator of CAMHD. “By focusing on workforce development, evidence-based practices and increased collaboration, we aim to create a more resilient and equitable system of care for our youth and their families.”

The WA'A initiative encompasses several key goals:

- Enhancing workforce capacity through professional development, innovative reimbursement strategies and sustainable recruitment infrastructure
- Increasing training in evidence-based practices and processes
- Strengthening care coordination to improve family and youth engagement and interagency coordination
- Elevating the voice of youth and caregiver peers with lived expertise
- Increasing access to evidence-informed and culturally appropriate supports that promote social, cultural and environmental connectedness
- Strengthening system-level interagency collaboration to support implementation and sustainability of the system of care approach

WA'A will enable CAMHD to build upon its existing services, which provide mental health care free of charge to eligible youth with severe emotional and/or behavioral challenges. These services include assessment, case management and a range of therapeutic supports provided in the home and community, as well as temporary out-of-home treatment as appropriate. For more information on CAMHD, visit <https://health.hawaii.gov/camhd/> and follow them on Facebook and Instagram @camhdhawaii.

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