



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

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO

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DOH EMPLOYEES RECOGNIZED FOR WORK IN PEDIATRIC MENTAL HEALTH

(From left to right): Eden Sun, Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (AMCHP)
President Marcus Allen and Renzy Baloran.

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HONOLULU — In a recent ceremony in Washington, D.C., the [Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs \(AMCHP\)](#) recognized Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) employees Renzy Baloran and Eden Sun with the 2025 Emerging Maternal & Child Health (MCH) Professional Award for outstanding state or local maternal and child health professionals. The award is given to those under 45 or with less than 10 years of experience who have made significant contributions to promoting and protecting the health of women, children and families.

“Both Renzy and Eden are fairly recent graduates of the master of public health program at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, and we are proud to have homegrown talent at the DOH who are passionate about public health and improving the lives of local families,” said Matthew Shim, Pediatric Mental Health Care Access Program (PMHCA) program director and chief of the Family Health Services Division.

Baloran and Sun coordinate the [PMHCA](#) grant, which is a \$2.2 million, five-year grant awarded to the DOH in 2021 to promote behavioral health integration into pediatric primary care. Integration includes providing teleconsultation, training, technical assistance and care coordination for pediatric primary care providers to diagnose, treat and refer children and youth 0 to 21 years old with behavioral health conditions.

Last August, PMHCA partnered with the Queen's Health Systems and the Hawai'i Community Foundation's Promising Minds initiative to launch the Mental Health Pediatric Access Line (MPAL). MPAL is the state's first dedicated warmline designed to significantly improve pediatric mental health services in Maui County by helping primary care providers quickly connect with mental health specialists to better assess, treat and refer patients with behavioral health needs. The pilot program provides free, same-day support to all pediatric primary care providers from any health system on Maui, Lāna'i and Moloka'i.

Hawai'i has long had a shortage of health care professionals in all fields, including psychiatry. [Current estimates from the University of Hawai'i](#) show a 47.5% shortage of child/adolescent psychiatrists in the state, meaning a demand for 68.9 full-time equivalent (FTE) psychiatrists compared to a supply of 36.2 FTE psychiatrists.

"This award is truly a reflection of the collective effort of our partnerships between government, community and philanthropic organizations to address the mental health needs of every child across the state, no matter where they live," Baloran said.

Through the PMHCA program, Baloran and Sun focus on three initiatives: 1) Provide training to pediatric providers on behavioral health topics; 2) Create a statewide warmline for pediatric providers to access curbside consultation from a child psychiatrist; and 3) Provide coordinated referrals and intake services.

"As it is early in our public health careers, we are grateful and excited for what lies ahead as we move forward with our work for PMHCA," Sun said. "We are truly honored to receive this award and continue the work with our colleagues and partners to support the mental health needs of our keiki and families in Hawai'i.

To learn more about the PMHCA program, visit health.hawaii.gov/pmhca.

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