

Across DHS: Island to Island

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 1

SPRING 2012

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- * New Benefits Processing System
- * 2012 DHS Legislation
- * Investigating Welfare Fraud
- * Directors Visit Kapolei Offices

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From the Director

Patricia McManaman

Over the past year I have been inspired by your dedication to the Department of Human Services and your commitment to families and children we serve across the State. I am also deeply appreciative of the advice and kind help that you've extended to me and my office during our first year. Your thoughtful input and comments have played a significant role in shaping the DHS as we move forward.

This edition of *Across DHS* highlights our successes over the past year. Together we are rebuilding and reshaping the DHS – one day at a time.

BESSD staff has reduced its backlog of benefit applications and continues to roll out the business processing re-engineering program across the State. Thanks to your hard work, families are receiving SNAP benefits much faster than ever.

SSD staff continues to provide essential services to adult and child victims of abuse. SSD also is actively rebuilding its staff and exploring new methods of delivering services to children and families in collaboration with its partners including the Office of Youth Services and the Departments of Health and Education.

While MQD is working diligently to rebuild its staff, it too has reduced eligibility backlogs and enabled beneficiaries to have more immediate access to needed medical services. MQD also successfully re-procured its QUEST contracts, and in the process expanded the number of health plans serving MQD clients from 3 to 5. MQD also realized savings of \$75M in State funds while preserving essential services for children, pregnant women, the elderly and the disabled.

VRSD staff is revitalizing Ho'opono and is actively engaged in long needed capital improvements to ensure staff and clients safety. VRSD is also actively engaged in reducing its backlog of cases as it rebuilds for the future.

HPHA recently appointed Hakim Ouansafi as its new Executive Director. He immediately launched the statewide "I Have a Dream" campaign and in collaboration with community volunteers has cleaned, painted, and revitalized over 150 public housing units.

OYS successfully emerged from the Settlement Agreement with the Department of Justice, and its staff is actively working to improve Statewide programs and conditions for at-risk and detained youth.

Thanks also to my colleagues in Personnel, Budget and Management who have worked with staff across the DHS to keep the department and divisions moving forward.

Finally, please join me in thanking Pankaj Bhanot for his year of service as the DHS Deputy Director and in welcoming Barbara Yamashita. I deeply appreciate Pankaj's advice and counsel over this past year and will miss his laughter ringing through the office. Barbara brings to the DHS strong administrative skills honed at the Department of Health and a commitment to community. Together, we look forward to working with you in 2012.



Applications Backlog Reduced

As a result of all your hard work over the past year and a half, most Hawaii residents who apply for public assistance now receive their SNAP benefits the same day they apply. The Department of Human Services (DHS) and its Benefit, Employment and Support Services Division (BESSD) attribute the increased timeliness to your flexibility and dedication to serving clients, and to the introduction of the Business Processing Re-engineering Project (BPRP) launched on Maui and the Big Island late last year, and on Oahu earlier this year.

The Hawaii SNAP statewide case load jumped 11.1% last year. That's in addition to a 63% increase between 2007 and 2010. Those increases, coupled with a simultaneous hiring freeze, workforce reduction and furlough, led to a backlog of cases, and a subsequent lawsuit against the state for failing to meet federal compliance laws. DHS implemented BPRP in late 2011 to comply with the 30-day federal mandate for processing SNAP applications; 7 in the case of emergencies.

The Department of Agriculture establishes the processing rates for SNAP applications. No state is currently achieving the 100% benchmark set by the federal government. In fact, only six states are 95% or greater. Historically, the Department of Agriculture does not intervene unless processing timelines drop significantly below the statutory rates. Judge David Ezra's January 2012 injunction reflects a nationally acceptable range of tolerance. The order also recognized that the DHS has voluntarily launched BPRP to remedy the backlog. By setting benchmarks through 2012, Judge Erza is allowing the state to ratchet up timeliness as we train and roll out more units under BPRP.

With your continued perseverance, we are on the way to meeting those benchmarks! The first day that Maui and the Big Island units rolled out BPRP, eligibility workers reported significantly improved application processing time, and clients leaving the offices with benefit packages in hand. Currently, the Maui units are reporting an average of 84% same-day services; North Hilo an average of 65% timeliness; and South Hilo an average of 75%. BPRP was launched in Kapolei, Oahu in early January 2012 and that office is reporting 80% same-day processing. BPRP is scheduled for launch on Kauai in July 2012. Great work, everyone!

Seeking Boards and Commissions Applicants

With the start of the 2012 Legislative Session, the Office of the Governor is reminding interested individuals who are looking to serve the public to consider service on a board or commission. Applications are being accepted for service on numerous boards and commissions including the Hawai'i Tourism Authority, Civil Defense Advisory Council (representing the Island of Hawai'i), and the Island Burial Councils.

Members of the public may apply themselves or recommend qualified applicants via <http://hawaii.gov/gov>. "Each of these seats fulfills a unique need in the oversight and leadership of some of the State's most important interests and industries," Governor Neil Abercrombie said. "We are seeking leaders of diverse backgrounds who have the foresight and will to continue the forward momentum that Hawai'i has achieved over the past year toward a revitalized economy and unified, statewide community."

The Office of the Governor oversees more than 160 boards and commissions established by the state constitution, statutes or executive orders.

Boards and commissions vacancies include seats on aerospace, alternative medicine, emergency medical services, environment, cosmetology, economic development, corrections, culture and the arts, education, festivals, health and human services, medical education, pest control, physical therapy, private detectives, public housing, small business, state parks, taxation, technology, tourism, voter registration, and wastewater treatment. More information, including a complete list of vacancies and application instructions, is posted at <http://hawaii.gov/gov/about/boards-commissions.html>. ~ This article come from the Governor's page on the Hawaii State government website.

2012 DHS Bills

HB2536/SB2798 - RELATING TO INSURER REQUIREMENTS - Requires all commercial health care insurers operating in Hawaii to share with the Department of Human Services, a listing of their members for Medicaid eligibility determination.

SB2126—RELATING TO HEALTH CARE—Consolidates the authority, duties, responsibilities, and jurisdiction of the department of human services and the department of health, as they relate to various health care services; transfers the programs of the Department of Human Services relating to home and community-based case management, community care foster family homes, and adult day care to the Department of Health on July 1, 2014.

HB2539/SB2801 - RELATING TO ADULT ABUSE PERPETRATOR CHECKS FOR CHILD CARE PROVIDERS - Allows the Department of Human Services to conduct adult abuse perpetrator checks on legally exempt providers who care for children receiving child care subsidies from the department, applicants who want to operate a child care facility, prospective employees of the applicant, licensed child care providers and new employees of the registered or licensed provider.

HB2540/SB2802 - RELATING TO FEES FOR CHILD CARE LICENSING AND REGISTRATION - Allows the Department of Human Services to charge reasonable fees to obtain a child care license or certificate of registration. Establishes a special fund.

HB2542/SB2804 - RELATING TO THE HAWAII INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS - Establishes the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness to be administratively attached to the Department of Human Services; makes an unspecified appropriation for administrative expenses.

HB2545/SB2807 - FINANCIAL ABUSE OF AN ELDER - To establish a reporting requirement on the part of Hawaii financial institutions to report suspected instances of financial abuse directed towards, targeting, or committed against an elder directly to a local law enforcement agency instead of initially reporting to the Department of Human Services.

HB2546/SB2808 - MAKING AN EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES FOR HEALTH CARE PAYMENTS - To appropriate \$11,881,157 in general funds for an emergency appropriation for fiscal year 2011-2012 for health care payments (HMS 401) to address a funding shortfall in the Medicaid program.

SB2123 - RELATING TO HEALTHCARE— Requires and appropriates funds for the Office of Community Services, in coordination with other relevant state agencies, to provide social services for survivors of human trafficking.

HB2533/SB2795 - RELATING TO THE DEFINITION OF AGGRAVATED CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE CHILD PROTECTIVE ACT - To ensure that the definition of "aggravated circumstances" in chapter 587A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is consistent with recent changes to the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act provisions.

HB2534/ SB2796 - RELATING TO DEATH BENEFITS - Makes permanent the decreased funeral benefit for medical and financial assistance recipients. And to establish that the Department is responsible for the payment of the crematory and mortuary services for unclaimed dead human bodies after approving the determination that a dead human body is unclaimed.

HB2535/SB2797- RELATING TO PSYCHOTROPIC MEDICATIONS IN MEDICAID - Allows the substitution of generic anti-anxiety and antidepressant medications in Medicaid to continue by repealing the sunset date.

HB2537 - RELATING TO DISCLOSURE OF RECORDS CONCERNING APPLICANTS AND RECIPIENTS OF HUMAN SERVICES AFTER AN IN CAMERA REVIEW BY THE COURT—Allows the Department of Human Services to disclose confidential records pursuant to a court order, after an in camera review of the records by the court, upon a showing of good cause by the party seeking the release of the records.

HB2538/SB2800 - RELATING TO EXEMPTIONS FROM CHILD CARE LICENSING - Adds exemptions for any kindergarten, school, or program licensed by the Charter School Review Panel, the Hawaii Council of Private Schools, or any federal agency from child care licensing by the Department of Human Services.

HB2540/SB2802 - RELATING TO FEES FOR CHILD CARE LICENSING AND REGISTRATION - Allows the Department of Human Services to charge reasonable fees to obtain a child care license or certificate of registration. Establishes a special fund.

HB2541/SB2803 - RELATING TO CONTRACT PROPOSALS FOR CHILD CARE - Allows an exception to allow for proposals to be received from organizations that are not yet licensed to operate a child care program at a facility specified in the request for proposals.

HB2543/SB2805 - RELATING TO PUBLIC HOUSING - Reduces the number of resident board member candidates that must be submitted by the resident advisory board for consideration by the governor from five to three.

HB2544/SB2806 - RELATING TO PUBLIC HOUSING - Authorizes board of directors to set the executive director's compensation based on a comparability analysis, pursuant to Federal regulations.

HB2548/SB2810 - RELATING TO EMPLOYMENT EXEMPTION FOR DOMESTIC SERVICES AUTHORIZED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES - To clarify and make consistent the wording relating to the exclusion of home and community based and attendant care services from the definition of "employment" for purposes of workers' compensation, temporary disability insurance, and the Prepaid Health Care Act.

Supporting Hawai'i's At-Risk Youth



Lunchtime Presentation: Farrington High School Peer Education Program. Teacher, Allan Silva

The Office of Youth Services (OYS) sponsored a conference last November entitled “Shaping the Future for Youth: Knowledge, Strategies, Connections”. The purpose of the gathering was to bring together personnel from within the judicial system and the private, nonprofit social service agencies. The Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN), Department of Health (DOH), Department of Human Services (DHS), The Honolulu Police Department (HPD) and Coalition for a Drug-Free Hawaii (CDFH) were among the 50+ agencies and organizations that participated. Presentations focused on mentoring, anti-bullying, challenging youth, building ‘ohana and youth leadership.

David Hipp, OYS Director and conference organizer said his goals included conference participants returning home with some new knowledge, learning at least one new strategy to use in their work and, establishing one new connection with another professional.

Highlights of the conference included two videos produced with support from Films by Youth Inside (FYI). “Born ‘Fo Bang” told the story of a young man’s struggle to stand up for himself and his dreams, in spite of the violent and negative influences of his parents and friends. The second video provided raw insight into the challenges facing youth whose parents abuse drugs. FYI Artistic Director and Founder, Alex Munoz, first worked with incarcerated youth in Los Angeles County. He has produced over 50 short films in California, Guam and Hawaii.

And to demonstrate the vitality of Hawaii youth, the Farrington High School Peer Education group played music and sang during the conference luncheon. Their departing message – Live Aloha!



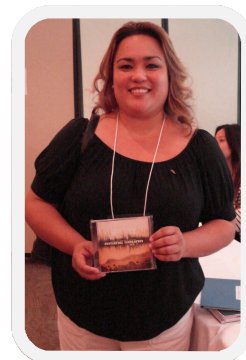
Girls Circle: Tia Roberts & Marcie



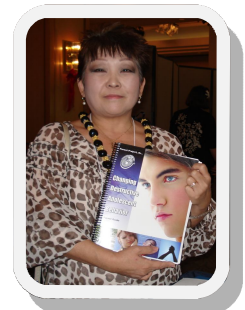
HYCF Seven Challenges: Derrick McMoore, Mitch Samao and Lisa Nasau



Intensive Monitoring: Karlotta Carvalho & April Saiki



Boys & Girls Club Waianae Unit: Lana Keamo



The Parent Project: June Kawamura



Teen Court: La Verne Bishop & Arlene Kuamura

Noteworthy

The First, but Not the Last

The first Tongan 'Aha (a gathering of people with purpose) was held on October 4, 2011 in Wai-pahu. Rosaline Tupou, LCW3 supervisor, and Sarah Ortiz, a former OSSCM worker and now a BESSD EW, engaged the Tongan community and organized the event. CWS service providers, HPD, CWS staff and members of the Tongan community participated. CWS presented program and licensing information to individuals and families interested in becoming resource caregivers for children who need foster care. Prominent community leaders presented information on parenting and motherhood in the Tongan culture. All of the information was presented in breakout groups giving participants opportunities to ask questions and to exchange information. Tongan food was also served for lunch and there was Tongan dance and music during the lunch break. Based on the evaluations, the participants want more 'Aha in the future. ~ Rosaline Tupou, LCW3 Supervisor

Residents Request Program Revival

At the request of Governor Neil Abercrombie, the Weed and Seed Program is returning to Mayor Wright Homes (MWH) to help the residents promote security and safety issues. MWH is part of the Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) inventory, and houses over 300 families. HPHA is administratively attached to the Department of Human Services (DHS). Maile Kanemaru has been the Executive Director of Weed and Seed Honolulu since its inception in 1998.

New to the DHS 'Ohana

July 2011 - Richard Mello, Corrections Manager III, Office of Youth Services, Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility

October 2011 – Kayla Rosenfeld, Public Information Officer, Office of the Director

October 2011 - Leslie Tawata, Assistant Administrator, Med-QUEST Division

December 2011 – Catherine A. Betts, Executive Director, Commission on the Status of Women

January 2012 – Hakim Ouansafi, Executive Director, Hawaii Public Housing Authority

February 2012—Barbara Yamashita, Deputy Director, Office of the Director

Promotions

September 2011 - Lea Grupen, Vocational Rehabilitation Manager II, Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the Blind

January 2012 – Paul Sasaki, Business Management Officer II, Management Services Office

February 2012— Keith Spencer, Staff Development Services, Training Staff

Hawaii Combats Consumer Fraud [Don Selle, DHS Investigator](#)

Unauthorized use of Electronic Benefit Transfers (EBT) cards is one type of consumer fraud that interferes with the State's ability to assist people who need help with food security. Card holders and their designated representative(s) are the only people legally permitted to use Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, formerly known as food stamps. The Investigation (INVO) Section of the Department of Human Services vigorously investigates and prosecutes Welfare Fraud.

Clients receive their welfare benefits, including SNAP, on an EBT card that functions like a bank debit card. Unauthorized individuals should not use EBT cards to purchase food items, nor should they buy cards from friends, relatives or strangers. Unauthorized purchase of SNAP benefits is a crime and offenders are subject to prosecution.

It's also possible the customer will become a victim of fraud when purchasing SNAP benefits illegally. When an authorized EBT cardholder offers to sell their card for half the remaining value, sometimes they will cancel the card before the customer can use it. Fraud also can occur between the time the seller swipes a card to show a customer the total dollar value, and when the card is handed over to the customer. At some point during the transaction the seller will perform a fancy card switch and give the customer a worthless card. Either way, the card holder keeps their benefits and the buyer walks away empty handed.

The DHS Investigative Unit has referred 411 cases over the past few years to the Attorney General or local prosecutors' offices. 295 cases have been adjudicated through Administrative Disqualification Hearings. 1,950 cases were resolved through a signed waiver by the recipient to disqualify for one year (first offense), two years (second offense) or lifetime (3rd offense).

The Department maintains a Fraud Hotline for reporting suspected fraud or misuse of benefits. The number is 587-8444. Anonymous complaints are accepted.

Investigation Results July—December 2011

CONVICTIONS (15): Improper reporting of household composition, absent parent in the home, unreported social security income, child out of the home, spouse in the home, false documentation, forgery

Oahu	10	\$240,275.48
Maui	2	\$46,347.00
Hawaii-Hilo	3	\$23,653.28
TOTAL		\$310,277.76

DEFERRED ACCEPTANCES OF GUILT/NO CONTEST (11)

Oahu	9	\$183,484.69
Maui	2	\$23,109.00
Total		\$206,593.69

TOTAL FRAUD CONVICTIONS (26)

(Convictions and Deferred Acceptances of Guilt)

Oahu	19	\$423,760.17
Maui	4	\$69,456.00
Hawaii-Hilo	3	\$23,653.28
Total		\$516,869.45

GRAND JURY INDICTMENTS (10)

Indicted but not yet proven guilty in a court of law

TOTAL FRAUD INDICTMENTS (47)

Oahu	9	\$132,096.00
Hawaii-Hilo	1	\$18,289.00
Total		\$150,385.00

NEW CASES REFERRED TO PROSECUTORS (17)

Oahu	9	\$133,867.56
Hawaii-Hilo	2	\$54,764.15
Hawaii-Kona	1	\$17,729.88
Kauai	1	\$3,578.00
Maui	4	\$55,596.00
TOTAL	17	\$265,535.59

ADMINISTRATIVE DISQUALIFICATIONS

55 Recipients disqualified by Waivers
24 Administrative Disqualifications Hearings

FLEEING FELON PROGRAM

91 financial/food stamp HAWI cases were closed (savings) **\$518,952.00**

TAX OFF-SET PROGRAM

State tax intercepts \$27,685.07
Federal tax intercepts \$39,855.63
Total (State and Federal) intercepts \$67,540.70

Mahalo . . . Sulang . . . Arigato . . . Kalangan . . . Fa'afetai . . .
Salamat . . . Cám ơn . . . Si yus masi . . . Kili so . . . Lac jak . . . Thank you

Dear Madams,

I am writing with regards to your sub unit at Ka'u, on the Big Island, & in particular Michelle Ortega & her assistant "JoJo". I'm sure that you get your share of negative correspondence during the course of any normal business day, but in this instance my communication is entirely positive & I am writing to commend the efforts of these women. JoJo is the receptionist, & is always friendly & helpful, & more often than not is able to resolve any issues I have had on the spot. At the very least, I am able to leave with the necessary instructions & paperwork. My case manager Michelle Ortega is always available & communicative & takes the time to phone me should she require further information regarding my case. Both Michelle & JoJo return my calls promptly. My family has been "on & off" welfare since 2008 & our experience of case management in general has been less than complimentary. It is refreshing to discover these women in a rural office that is understaffed & over-worked, that not only maintain a very high level of professionalism, but get in done in such a friendly & efficient manner. Hana Hou ! ~ Keola, Joy & Steve McKenzie

Aloha,

Just spoke with a woman at BESSD about a client. Of course I didn't get her name, but this very helpful, concerned person could have easily told me I had the wrong number, department, whatever. She did nothing but assist me in every way that she could. Not only did I not get her name, I failed to thank her very, very much and wish her a Happy New Year. Mahalo, ~ dmarie

Aloha,

I want to recognize the extraordinary efforts of people working to address the safe disposition of Hawaii Medical Center (HMC) patients during and after the facility closed in 2011. In preparation, MQD staff began assessing the situation before HMC officially announced it was closing its doors. Several individuals truly went above and beyond their duty to provide assistance for all patients, not just Medicaid recipients. Although many people have helped with the situation, the most notable are Madi Silverman and Dr. Curtis Toma. I'd also like to recognize the close collaboration with DOH, particularly Keith Ridley. The Kapolei Eligibility Unit also deserves recognition for its efforts. All eligibility issues were expedited and did not pose a barrier to placement. All involved staff provided the finest representation of the State through their contributions at this time of crisis.
~ Dr. Kenneth Fink, Hawaii Med-Quest Administrator

Vocational Rehab Clients and Technology Development

Cutting edge technology and practical solutions to removing barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from fully participating in education, the workplace and in social settings is the topic of a special conference later this month. The 27th Annual International Technology and Persons with Disabilities Conference sponsored by California State University, Northridge is the largest of its kind in the world. Last year more than 4,800 people attended. On February 29, 2012, five (5) of Vocational Rehabilitation's clients currently enrolled in the Technology for Untapped Talent (TUT) program will participate in the presentation on "Careers: Computerized Design and Manufacturing" with Dr. Neil Scott and Raemi Tokuhama from the University of Hawaii. The TUT program is a collaboration between VRSBD and University of Hawaii at Manoa to create quality employment opportunities for our disabled clients. They learn how to create technology that enables them to be employed in careers of their choice. For more information on the conference, go to <http://www.csunconference.org>



Directors Visit Kapolei Facility

Kakuhihewa: A 5-story facility in the business district of Kapolei, Oahu. It's busy inside with clients seeking all kinds of benefit services. Meeting and hearings rooms are available for clients and their representatives.



BESSD Ewa-Waipahu Unit



Vocational Rehabilitation Unit



Med-Quest Finance and Systems Office



BESSD Nanakuli Unit



SSD Central Files



SSD Unit 2



First to Work Unit



SSD Unit 1



BESSD Central Files



MQD Long-term Care Unit



BESSD Kamokila Unit



Common scene in Kapolei offices: cubicles overflowing with paperwork



Med-Quest Team



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Dedicated to Improving People's Lives

Civil Rights Corner [Geneva Watts, Compliance Officer](#)

Language Access Training is required by the Department of Human Services to prevent discriminatory practices against individuals with limited English proficiency. It's also designed to enhance access to programs, services and activities, comply with Federal and State laws and resolution agreements, and more importantly, to ensure that all eligible individuals benefit from our services. Please review protocols for providing interpreter services at no cost to an LEP individual applying for or receiving services at the DHS.

Some changes were made to the 2012 training to provide updated data. The "If You Need an Interpreter" poster published by the Office of Language Access (OLA) was revised to correct some wording, add some languages, update the name of the Governor, and to provide a local contact number. Please remember to insert your appropriate contact number at the bottom and replace outdated posters in all offices and waiting rooms with the updated OLA poster.

A presentation of the 2012 training and related forms are available on the DHS Q:/ and U:/ drives. That information also is posted on the Civil Rights Corner of the DHS Website <http://hawaii.gov/dhs/main/civil-rights-corner>.

2012 Language Access Training verification forms, signed by each DHS employee, are due in PERS/CRCS no later than February 29, 2012. Remember to keep a copy in your office because you may be asked for verification of your most recent language access training. Thank you for your continued support in these efforts. If you have questions, please call 586-4955 or e-mail gwatts@dhs.hawaii.gov.