



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

**News Release**

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GOVERNOR

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**STRENGTHENING AND IMPROVING RURAL HEALTH CARE  
INFRASTRUCTURE THROUGH QUALITY AND COLLABORATION  
5<sup>th</sup> Annual Hawaii Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Conference**

HONOLULU — National and local leaders in public health, health care, business and government will gather on the Big Island on September 28-30 at the Waikoloa Beach Marriott to discuss the challenges and issues related to Rural Health Care in Hawaii. Presented by the Hawaii State Department of Health's Office of Rural Health, this conference provides a forum for those involved in the implementation of the Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Program (MRHFP) to listen and learn about new program information; discuss and develop future goals and objectives; and to share program experiences and success stories that have significantly helped improve quality and performance.

Sherry Balistreri, Director of the Hawaii State Office of Rural Health, said, "The Flex program allows us to target the needs of the hospital and the concerns of the community it serves. The advantage of small hospitals is their ability to adapt quickly to changes in the health care environment. It is because of this advantage that we feel rural health can lead the way to higher quality care and improved health for Hawaii's communities."

The Conference will highlight the Hawaii Critical Access Hospital CAH/FLEX program objective areas of community development, network development, quality improvement, Emergency Medical Service (EMS) integration, and CAH operations. Success stories, tools and models will be presented.

The News Media is welcome to attend any of the conference sessions scheduled for the three-day event.

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