



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

# News Release

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GOVERNOR

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For Immediate Release: June 8, 2006

06-41

## **PUBLIC HEALTH EMPLOYEES HONORED**

HONOLULU – The Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) today announced the recipients of the 2006 DOH Incentive Service Awards. This year's winners include a Pre-audit Clerk as Employee of the Year, a Bioterrorism Preparedness Manager as Manager of the Year, and a Case Management Team that supports individuals living with mental retardation and developmental disabilities as Team of the Year.

Health Director Chiyome Fukino, MD, said, "We are very proud of the commitment and dedication of our public health employees who strive everyday to protect and improve the health of the people of Hawaii. These outstanding individuals and team set an example for all to follow."

Employee of the Year, Maria Kunihiro, has worked for the State for over 44 years. She currently leads a staff of 13 clerks in the DOH Administrative Services Office, where she has worked since 1970. Ms. Kunihiro was nominated for her long-standing commitment and dedication, for keeping up with a sizeable section workload, and for doing whatever it takes to get the job done. All the while she remains customer oriented, pleasant and responsive.

Manager of the Year, Bart Aronoff, supervises and evaluates the DOH public health preparation and response in the area of bioterrorism. The Branch Chief and 12-year DOH employee was cited for excellence in overseeing the State's Strategic National Stockpile Plan to rapidly obtain needed medical supplies and vaccines during a bioterrorism event. He was also recognized for overseeing emergency training to prepare DOH personnel for their roles in the event of a bioterrorism event. In addition, he significantly enhanced collaboration in the emergency response network between DOH and local and national organizations.

The DOH Team of the Year, Case Management Unit 4 (CMU-4), serves individuals in windward Oahu who live with developmental disabilities and mental retardation. CMU-4 includes eight social workers, a nurse and two support workers. They created a new system of working together, rather than individually, to ensure their clients receive needed supports in the community. The resulting synergy enables CMU-4 to serve clients and their families with shorter response times and better collaboration for challenges and issues that arise. Clients and their families have reported greater satisfaction since the introduction of CMU-4's Team concept.

The DOH Incentive Service Award winners, Ms. Kunihiro, Mr. Aronoff and CMU-4, will represent the Department of Health in the statewide competition October 4<sup>th</sup>.

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