



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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PUBLIC HEALTH EMPLOYEES HONORED

HONOLULU — The Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH) today announced the recipients of the 2007 DOH Incentive Service Awards. This year's winners include a registered nurse with the Public Health Nursing Section, Kaua'i District Health Office, as Employee of the Year, a Clinical Medical Director in the Adult Mental Health Division as Manger of the Year, and the Hawai'i State Hospital, Smoke-Free Team as Team of the Year.

"It is a privilege and a pleasure to recognize the efforts of these public health employees as they go about their daily mission of improving the health and wellness of Hawai'i's 'ohana," Health Director Chiyome Fukino, MD, said. "As role models for the Department of Health, they are making lives better by their ongoing commitment to improve the health status of those they serve."

Employee of the Year, Patricia Pablo has worked in public health nursing for more than 21 years. She provides nursing intervention services to people and communities that are identified as "at risk" for a variety of health problems. Throughout her career, she has gone above and beyond the call of duty, building outstanding relationships with partner agencies and serving as a compassionate advocate for her clients.

(more)

Manager of the Year, Thomas Hester, MD, is responsible for ensuring the effective planning, development, monitoring, and evaluation of the State-operated and contracted mental health programs and services for adults with severe and persistent mental illness. Since 2006, Hester has cultivated a strong relationship with the University of Hawai'i to develop a workforce of physicians, nurses, and social workers to provide much improved mental health services to clients throughout the State. He supported grants that brought in over \$12 million and new technology to improve the system of care. Under his leadership, Hawai'i's mental health system rose from last in national ratings to potentially one of the best.

The DOH Team of the Year, the Hawai'i State Hospital, Smoke-Free Team, was formed in 2005 to transition the hospital to a smoke-free facility. Because research suggests tobacco cessation is particularly difficult for some individuals with psychiatric disorders, the Smoke-Free Team used a multi-pronged approach leading up to going smoke free. The team researched ways to manage tobacco dependence, developed replacement therapies for patients, and even hosted an art contest. To celebrate a new healthier environment, the group planned a concert and picnic.

The DOH Incentive Service Award winners, Ms. Pablo, Dr. Hester, and The Hawai'i State Hospital Smoke-Free Team, will represent the Department of Health in the statewide competition on October 4, 2007.

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