

## Supporting Healthy Youth: The Healthy Hawai'i Initiative and the Hawai'i Partnership for Standards-Based School Health Education

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The Healthy Hawai'i Initiative, established by the Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH) with Hawai'i tobacco settlement funding and the Hawai'i Partnership for Standards-Based School Health Education, initiated by the American Cancer Society, Hawai'i Pacific, Inc., are major sources of support for school-based health promotion and disease prevention programs in Hawai'i. This article provides an overview of these efforts to promote child and adolescent health throughout the state.

### The Healthy Hawai'i Initiative

The state of Hawai'i sued the tobacco industry in 1997 to prevent it from marketing tobacco to youth and to recover resources the state has spent on tobacco-caused health problems and disability. Under a Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) between a number of states and the nation's five largest tobacco manufacturers, Hawai'i is scheduled to receive \$1.3 billion over the next 25 years. Actual payments may be adjusted downward if any of several specified provisions occur, such as a decrease in national cigarette sales (Hawai'i Community Foundation, 2001).

In 1999, the Hawai'i legislature enacted landmark legislation (Act 304, SLH 1999), which devoted 60% of the MSA payments to public health efforts and set aside the remaining 40% for an Emergency Budget Reserve Fund. Thirty-five percent of the total amount was allocated to the DOH for the Healthy Hawai'i Initiative and the Children's Health Insurance Program. The remaining funds were allocated to a Tobacco Prevention and Control Trust Fund for tobacco education, prevention, and cessation, to be invested and administered by the Hawai'i Community Foundation. The legislation mandated that the DOH expend 25% of the settlement money towards health promotion and disease prevention programs. The DOH collaborated with its Health and Wellness Advisory Group, composed of representatives from leading community agencies and coalitions, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to create the Healthy Hawai'i Initiative (HHI). This initiative is a major, statewide effort to encourage healthy lifestyles and to establish the social and environmental conditions to support them. The HHI emphasizes the healthy development of children and adolescents in relation to three critical risk factors: poor nutrition, lack of physical activity, and tobacco use. Each contributes significantly to Hawai'i's burden of chronic disease.

The four major components of the HHI are school-based programs, community programs, public and professional education, and program evaluation. The school-based and youth programs focus on reaching youth to prevent the initiation of tobacco use and to engage them as advocates among their peers for tobacco use prevention and control. The HHI made strong progress during its first year. In terms of school-based programs, the DOH and DOE partnered to:

- Fund ten Resource Teacher positions (four at the state level and six at the district level) to implement the Hawai'i Health Education and the Hawai'i Physical Education Standards, K-12, statewide.
- Fund 17 schools statewide to implement sustainable volunteer-based health and after school programs and policies.
- Provide seed money for an Instructional Resource Center for reference materials on health-related behaviors.
- Serve as members of the Hawai'i Partnership for Standards-based School Health Education, made up of representatives from public and private organizations, to support health education and healthy school environments.
- Provide funding for health-related professional development opportunities for educators.

The HHI also provided funding for 16 pilot Coordinated School Health Program (CSHP) school sites. These schools, and their complexes, work to implement the nationally recognized Centers for Disease Control and Prevention eight-component CSHP model, which includes (1) health education, (2) physical education and activity, (3) food service, (4) health services, (5) mental health and social services, (6) school policy and environment, (7) faculty and staff health promotion and (8) family and community involvement (Kolbe, Kann, & Brener, 2001). The DOH and DOE collaborate to integrate the Coordinated School Health Program components into Hawai'i's existing DOE Comprehensive Student Support System (CSSS) model.

### The Hawai'i Partnership for Standards-Based School Health Education

In anticipation of the release of the new Hawai'i Health Education Standards, the American Cancer Society, Hawai'i

Pacific, Inc., initiated the Hawai'i Partnership for Standards-Based School Health Education in July 1999. The goal of this public and private partnership is to implement standards-based school health education to promote child and adolescent health through collaboration among the state's health, education, and business communities (Pateman, Irvin, Nakasato, Serna, & Yahata, 2000). The partnership includes representatives from the American Cancer Society, Hawai'i Pacific, Inc (ACS.); Hawai'i State Department of Education (DOE); Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH); Hawai'i Board of Education (BOE); College of Education, University of Hawai'i; Meadow Gold Dairies; Bank of Hawai'i Foundation; Hawaiian Electric company (HECO); Hawaiian Electric and Light Company (HELCO); Maui Electric Company (MECO); Hawai'i State Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA); Area Health Education Center, John A. Burns School of Medicine, University of Hawai'i and DOE School Food Service Program.

The Partnership helped establish an annual professional development plan for K-12 educators in Hawai'i. The plan includes:

- Spring Workshops—DOE and the University of Hawai'i College of Education (COE) have collaborated for the past three years to offer professional development workshops on standards-based school health education for K-12 educators on Oahu and on Kauai, Maui, Kona, and Hilo.
- Summer Institutes—COE offers a range of health-related summer institutes for graduate credit, which are funded by the DOE and DOH. Interested participants should watch for the spring publication of the University of Hawai'i Summer Sessions 2002 Catalog of Courses.
- Fall Conference—DOE and DOH have sponsored statewide "Health Celebration" conferences for the past two years. The 2000 conference attracted approximately 350 participants. The 2001 conference, held at the Hawai'i Convention Center, drew nearly 450 participants. The next conference is scheduled for November 4, 2002.

In addition to supporting professional development for educators, the Partnership worked with Meadow Gold Dairies to publicize the new Hawai'i Health Education Standards with a 1999-2000 Got Health? campaign, featured on 300,000 milk carton side panels. The Got Health? promotion appeared on half-gallon side panels, designed for families and community members. The promotion also appeared on half-pint side panels, targeted to reach students and teachers during school meal programs.

The Partnership also submitted an article entitled, "Got Health? The Hawai'i Partnership for Standards-Based School Health Education" to the *Journal of School Health*. When the article was published in October, 2000 (Pateman, Irvin,

Nakasato, Serna, & Yahata, 2000), that issue of the *Journal of School Health* featured front cover artwork of "The Keiki Dance Class," donated by local artist Alfred Furtado, and a back cover full-page advertisement funded by Meadow Gold Dairies, HECO, HELCO, and MECO.

Together, the Partnership collaborates to build strong alliances that support and promote health education. The bridges between state departments, academia, community agencies, and businesses provide flexibility and responsiveness for a systems approach to implement standards-based school health education. Meeting the professional development and curriculum resource needs of classroom teachers is vital to effecting change for students. The Partnership pools expertise and resources and advocates for policies to support sustained and expanded health education efforts in Hawai'i's schools.

## Conclusion

The quality of school health education in Hawai'i has grown at an amazing pace since the publication of the DOE Hawai'i Health Education Standards in 1999. The standards have allowed educators, health specialists, and community members, who were working in isolation, to unite for a common goal—improving the health and well being of Hawai'i's youth. The challenge is to continue this momentum for skills-based school health education and coordinated school health programs; maintain the excitement and deep interest that has characterized the state's teacher education and professional development efforts; and invite more parents, educators, policy makers, and community members to join hands for "Healthy Keiki, Healthy Hawai'i."

## References

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