



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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GOVERNOR

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**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RECEIVES
U.S. SURGEON GENERAL'S CHAMPION AWARD**

HONOLULU – U.S. Department of Health and Human Services officials today recognized the Hawai'i State Department of Health Healthy Hawai'i Initiative (HHI) for its work to combat childhood obesity in Hawai'i. Dr. David Rutstein, Chief Medical Officer of the U.S. Public Health Service, presented a Surgeon General's Champion Award with Lt. Gov. James R. "Duke" Aiona, Jr. to Health Director Chiyome Fukino, M.D., during an event with students at Wai'ala'e Elementary School. U.S. Navy Lieutenant Andy Baldwin, also known from the reality show "The Bachelor," led the dignitaries and students in exercise routines demonstrating how physical activity can be fun and rewarding.

"The ultimate solution to address childhood obesity is to stop it before it starts," said Lt. Governor Aiona. "How our children and families live now will determine how healthy they are in the future."

The visit from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is a part of the *Healthy Youth for a Healthy Future* project that brings well deserved attention to communities throughout America that are coming together to address childhood overweight and obesity prevention. The project also recognizes local programs that use innovative approaches to encourage kids to eat right and exercise.

Wai'ala'e Elementary is just one example of numerous schools throughout the state that have been impacted by the policy changes implemented through the Healthy Hawai'i Initiative and the Department of Education.

In accepting the award on behalf of the state Department of Health, Dr. Fukino addressed the crowd of more than 400 kindergarten through sixth-grade students. "Your teachers are working on teaching you so

you have strong minds,” said Dr. Fukino. “The Department of Health works to make sure you have strong bodies. You have an important lesson to teach us; you teach us to have kind hearts.”

The Healthy Hawai'i Initiative is helping the residents of Hawai'i lead healthier lives by providing tools and information on nutrition and physical activity and helping to create an environment that supports healthy choices. Schools in Hawai'i have modified their menus and are now serving more fruits, vegetables, low fat milk and whole grains. The Healthy Hawai'i Initiative also spearheaded the development of a Hawai'i State Plan for Physical Activity and Nutrition that includes public and private partnerships across the islands.

Following the event, Lt. Governor Aiona hosted a roundtable discussion on childhood obesity in Hawai'i with representatives from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, academia, government, and local businesses.

Childhood overweight is a serious health concern for children and adolescents in the United States. Since 1980, obesity has more than doubled among children ages two to five and more than tripled among youth ages six to 11 and adolescents ages 12-19. Additional information on the Surgeon General's Initiative can be found at <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/obesityprevention.html>.

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Attachment: Fact Sheet on the DOH Healthy Hawaii Initiative

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Healthy Hawaii Initiative Fact Sheet



The Department of Health's Healthy Hawaii Initiative (HHI) has made significant strides in helping all of Hawaii, including its youth, lead healthy lives.

Schools

- HHI worked with the DOE to establish the Wellness Guidelines, a policy that meets USDA food guidelines for meals and requires healthier foods to be offered on school campuses; addresses health, nutrition and physical education; encourages physical activity; and promotes professional development for teachers, administration and other school personnel.
- Schools are changing their menus to serve more fruits, vegetables, low fat milk and whole grains, and encouraging physical activity and P.E.
- Waialae Elementary is just one example of numerous schools statewide that have been touched by the work HHI and the DOE have been able to achieve through far reaching systems changes.
- Through annual conferences sponsored by HHI and DOE, teachers, administrators, and counselors of all schools – public, charter, and private – are able to learn about the latest standards-based health education and physical education and get resources to take back to their schools.
- Through the USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), HHI and the Department of Education will provide additional support for school-based nutrition education efforts in qualifying communities.

Community

- HHI's work brought together over 100 stakeholders to develop the *Hawaii Physical Activity and Nutrition Plan* to guide the collective efforts on physical activity and healthy eating.
- HHI works with elected officials, developers, planners and community advocates on developing recommendations and policies to design and physically change our communities into places where children and adults will find it easier to walk and bike to school, and work. This is one way to reintegrate physical activity into daily behavior.
- HHI is working in partnership with the Kalihi Palama Health Center to provide nutrition education programs for low-income families in the Kalihi-Palama area.

Public and Professional Education

- HHI has aired, "Start.Living.Healthy." media campaigns that give tips on healthy eating and being physically active. Public comments were positive to "Step It Up!" and some people reported taking the stairs and walking during lunch breaks to increase their physical activity. There was a significant increase in fruit consumption as a result of the "Fruit & Veggies. Good Choice!" messages.
- The "1% or Less is Best" campaign was successful in getting approximately 65,000 people to switch to low fat milk. One cup of whole milk has about as much fat as five strips of bacon and a cup of 2% milk has the fat content of about two strips of bacon; an individual drinking the recommended three cups of milk a day who switched from whole milk to 1% milk, would reduce their saturated fat intake by 3,311 grams and their calories by almost 47,000 a year.
- HHI and the University of Hawaii Department of Pediatrics have developed obesity prevention tools to help pediatricians talk to families with children. The tools consist of a training curriculum for doctors and handouts for families that outline healthy eating habits and is being piloted at the Kapiolani Womens' and Childrens' Pediatric Clinic.

Additional information on the Healthy Hawaii Initiative can be found at www.healthyhawaii.com.