



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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**MENTAL HEALTH AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE EXPERTS TO LEARN
ABOUT HAWAI'I FORENSIC ISSUES AT CONFERENCE**

HONOLULU -- Hawai'i's mental health and criminal justice stakeholders will gather at the Hawai'i Convention Center, April 14-16, 2009, for the 6th Annual Best Practices Conference to network with one another and to learn about the latest best practices in forensics. Approximately 300 people are expected to attend this year's conference titled "Responsibility and Recovery in the Legal System."

For several years, the number of cases in which mentally ill individuals are involved with Hawai'i's criminal justice system increased significantly. While neither the mental health nor criminal justice systems were designed to handle these "forensic cases," new advancements make it easier to successfully meet these challenges.

Sessions will feature national experts in the areas of law, mental health, and corrections as well as local experts including Judge Ronald Ibarra, Judge Lono Lee, Judge Barbara Takase, Judge Michael Wilson, and Judge Marcia Waldorf. Representatives from police, jail, mental health, consumers of services, and related agencies will lead sessions featuring innovative and effective forensic programs in Hawai'i. Incarcerated women from the Women's Community Correctional Center will also share their personal journeys of recovery.

(more)

One of the conference highlights will be the Sequential Intercept Model Mall Experience, which will allow participants to do a walk-through of what someone with a mental illness might experience in the criminal justice system. Participants will be guided through individualized scenarios where they will receive information from police officers, judges, mental health workers, and others at each point of the experience.

The 6th Annual Best Practices Conference is sponsored by the Hawai'i State Department of Health's Adult Mental Health Division and the Hawai'i Consortium for Continuing Medical Education.

For more information, visit <http://www.amhd.org/conferences/2009/> or contact the Mental Health Services Research, Evaluation, and Training Program by calling (808) 735-3435 or emailing conference@mhsret.org.

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