



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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**HAWAII SELECTED BY NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION
TO IMPROVE BIRTH OUTCOMES**

HONOLULU –The Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) Family Health Services Division (FHSD) has been selected as one of four states to participate in a Learning Network on Improving Birth Outcomes. Sponsored by the National Governors Association (NGA), Hawaii will join Indiana, New Mexico and West Virginia.

“Hawaii’s early childhood health objectives are a perfect fit with the NGA Learning Network,” said Gov. Neil Abercrombie. “My administration is committed to reducing infant mortality and to improve birth outcomes for healthier children and stronger families as we work toward transforming health care in Hawaii.”

“The NGA supports our goals to decrease premature births, ensure women and their families have access to quality care, reduce teen pregnancies, and expand home visitation and breastfeeding options,” said Health Director Loretta J. Fuddy. “Technical assistance from the Learning Network can help us learn from other states, engage new partners, and implement policies and initiatives to move the Hawaii Early Childhood Action Strategy plan forward.”

The goal of the Learning Network is to assist states in developing, aligning and implementing their key policies and initiatives related to the improvement of birth outcomes, as measured by the incidence of preterm births and infant mortality. NGA will convene in-state sessions with the

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selected states to facilitate this process as well as a networking conference for those states to share lessons learned and improve their planning processes.

The Learning Network will focus on demonstrated best practices of states that have improved birth outcomes. Participating states will learn about coordinating activities across agencies and available options to accelerate the pace of improving outcomes and reducing costs.

Lin Joseph, director of program services for the March of Dimes Hawaii Chapter noted, "We look forward to continuing the partnership with the Department of Health that was developed through the Hawaii Early Childhood Action Strategy initiative to ensure every baby born in Hawaii has a Healthy and Welcomed Start."

Danette Wong Tomiyasu, Family Health Services Division chief, stated "To improve birth outcomes and reduce infant mortality, systemic changes will need to include the development of a comprehensive effort with strong and multi-sector state, public-private and community-based level partnerships. This will require increased coordination between all partners toward a common agenda based on a shared understanding of the problem and identification of joint approaches and actions to achieve statewide goals."

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