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Department of Health's New Television Ad Pushes Teens to Rethink Popular Sweetened Teas and Coffee Drinks

HONOLULU – The Hawaii State Department of Health is expanding its nationally recognized Rethink Your Drink campaign with a new television ad urging teenagers to swap unhealthy sugary drinks for water instead. The attention-grabbing ad highlights the health consequences of drinking sweetened teas and coffee drinks, a category of sugary drinks that has been growing in popularity among Hawaii youth.

"Rethink Your Drink is a powerful platform for changing how our young people see sugary beverages and the risks these pose to their well-being," said Health Director Dr. Virginia Pressler. "By educating teens to choose water instead, we're helping them choose a healthier future, and nothing is sweeter than a long and healthy life."

The Rethink Your Drink campaign first launched in 2013 to help curb the obesity epidemic among Hawaii teenagers, who drink more sugary drinks than any other age group in the state. Soda, sports drinks, energy drinks, juice drinks, and sweetened tea/coffee drinks carry large amounts of sugar that put teens at risk for obesity, diabetes, and long-term health problems. Drinking one sugary drink per day can lead to an unintended increase in weight of up to 10 pounds per year.

Focus group testing with teenagers informed the concept, messaging, and engagement strategies for the new campaign. Ads will run through the end of this year. The campaign also includes statewide radio promotion, engagement at concerts, fairs, and other events frequented by teens across the state, and social media contests and giveaways. Print ads in malls and a second television ad are also planned for later this year.

"We rely heavily on the opinions from our Hawaii youth to keep the campaign relevant and appealing, and this has contributed to its effectiveness," explained Lola Irvin, Administrator for the Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Division. A 2014 evaluation demonstrated that the campaign previously reached over half of Hawaii's

teenagers, and 60 percent of teens who saw the ads reported drinking fewer sugary drinks as a result of seeing the ads.

Rethink Your Drink has become a national example for changing social attitudes and behavioral norms towards healthy lifestyles, winning three awards in Public Health Communications from the National Public Health Information Coalition in 2013. For more information about Rethink Your Drink and to watch the new television ad, please visit www.healthyhawaii.com/rethink-your-drink/

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