



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MENTAL HEALTH KOKUA RECEIVES GRANT FROM BANK OF HAWAII CHARITABLE FOUNDATION FOR GROUP HOME HOUSING NEEDS IN HILO AND KONA

HONOLULU ... November 9, 2009. Mental Health Kokua has received a grant of \$5,000 from the Bank of Hawaii Charitable Foundation to support Group Home Repairs and Renovations in Hilo and Kona, it was announced today by Greg Payton, Executive Director & CEO of Mental Health Kokua.

Mental Health Kokua's transitional and supportive housing programs provide safe and stabilizing places for adults with serious mental illness to live with trained staff on site up to 24 hours a day to address the recovery needs of the patients. The specific objectives for Mental Health Kokua's housing programs include reducing the need for hospitalization, improving quality of life, and increasing levels of self-sufficiency for program participants.

"We are very excited that the Bank of Hawaii Charitable Foundation has shown its support of our efforts in granting us much needed funds so we can provide better housing environments for the people we serve on Hilo and Kona," says Mr. Payton. "This grant will enable us to do needed interior and exterior renovation and repair work at Hilo Hale, Hale Amau, PATCH Place and Kealahou to maintain the integrity of the building structures and to provide a clean and safe living environment for program participants and agency staff."

Mental Health Kokua (www.MHKHawaii.org) is a private non-profit organization that began as The House in 1973, a half-way house designated to assist adults on Oahu with serious mental illness in transitioning from Hawaii State Hospital to the community. Since inception, Mental Health Kokua has grown from a single program providing mental health services on Oahu to an agency with recovery programs throughout Oahu, Maui, Kauai and The Big Island. Big Island services were initiated in Hilo in 1991 and in Kona in 1998. Last year, Mental Health Kokua provided services to 1,845 individuals and their families, and employed 160 people. On The Big Island, Mental Health Kokua reached 148 clients in 2008 including 33 in Kona and 115 in Hilo.

Mental Health Kokua believes that all citizens should have the opportunity to live, participate in and contribute to their communities. Through specially designed, highly professional and culturally-sensitive services and settings, Mental Health Kokua assists people with mental illness to achieve optimum recovery and functioning in the community, to live independently, and strives to eliminate the stigma attached to those living with mental illness.

Mental Health Kokua has two offices on The Big Island: 208 Wainaku Avenue in Hilo (808) 935-7167, and at 75-166 Kalani Street, Suite 103 in Kailua-Kona (808) 331-1468. Gary Michell is The Big Island County Services Director. The Main Administrative Offices are located at 1221 Kapiolani Boulevard, Suite 345, Honolulu. (808) 737-2523

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