



PRESS RELEASE
MAYOR KIRK CALDWELL
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
OFFICE OF HOUSING
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

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Press Office: (808) 768-5768

Mayor announces new Outreach Navigation Program



Mayor Caldwell is joined by Connie Mitchell of IHS and other stakeholders at today's press conference.

HONOLULU – Mayor Kirk Caldwell was joined by Office of Housing (HOU) Executive Director Marc Alexander, Community Services Deputy (DCS) Director Rebecca Soon and Institute for Human Services (IHS) Executive Director Connie Mitchell as the city announced its

latest effort to connect homeless individuals to available services through a new Outreach Navigation Program.

Also taking part in today's press conference was Governor David Ige's Homeless Coordinator Scott Morishige, State Department of Health Behavioral Health Administrator Amy Curtis and Program Support Services Manager Yara Sutton, Institute for Human Services attorney Chris Thomas, and Dr. Chad Koyanagi, a psychiatrist.

"Homeless individuals with mental health disorders need help, but for some of them we need to take a new approach," said Mayor Caldwell. "The city's new Outreach Navigation Program will do just that through a comprehensive partnership between the city, state, and non-government agencies. The new Outreach Navigation Program will triage those in need of help and bring them back to a path of wellness."

To view a replay of the press conference on Mayor Caldwell's Facebook page, please follow this link: <https://www.facebook.com/MayorKirk/videos/1213836492136149/>

The Outreach Navigation program is designed to serve the most service-resistant, chronically homeless individuals who do not accept assistance from service providers and may be suffering from mental illness. The \$500,000 contract for the program was awarded to the Institute for Human Services.

"For the past two years, IHS has witnessed the miracle of new medication that's cured mental illnesses for more than 40 chronically homeless individuals across Hawai'i who were willing to accept treatment," said Connie Mitchell, executive director of IHS. "Today, we are humbled to be awarded the homeless Outreach Navigation Program as it fulfills a much-needed gap in our system to help those who refuse, but are unaware they are sick, with obtaining access to treatment. Through assertive outreach, guardianships and utilization of Hawai'i's updated assisted community treatment law, we can take the necessary steps forward to help solve chronic homelessness in our state."

A major push of the city's new initiative is the use of psychiatric services to develop and implement treatment plans for patients, or file for Assisted Community Treatment orders.

"True compassion is getting folks who are suffering from mental illness off our streets," said Marc Alexander, executive director of HOU. "An analysis by the medical examiner has already shown that living without shelter leads to an average age of death of less than 53 years old, and often these deaths have a nexus to mental illness. We hope the new Outreach Navigation Program not only changes lives, but actually saves them."

First year goals and case files will be monitored by DCS in close collaboration with staff at IHS.

"Our kuleana is to work together hand-in-hand with IHS and their incredible team," said Rebecca Soon, deputy director of DCS. "Our staff will provide the partnership to get the resources out into the community and to make sure that our targets that have been set through this contract are being tracked and are being met."