

Dear Colleagues –

We're delighted to share with you this updated version of Hawai'i's *Integrated Infant and Early Childhood Behavioral Health Plan*! Changes have been made for clarification, updated timelines, and to accurately reflect work already in motion.

The past two years have been particularly challenging in Hawai'i, and healthy children and families continue to be a top priority for us all. We have been engaged in several activities to help promote the optimal mental health, growth, and development of Hawai'i's keiki from birth through age five and would like to share our work with you. The progress to date lays the groundwork for our areas of focus for the upcoming year. As with the first version of the Plan in March 2021, there are short-term (1 year), intermediate (2 years), and longer-term (3+ years) activities and objectives in this updated July 2022 version.

We would like to thank all of our partners thus far and encourage those of you who are reading this plan to look for opportunities for collaboration and to reach out to discuss how we can collectively have a bigger impact on the mental health and wellbeing of our keiki and their families.

In the Plan, we use infant and early childhood behavioral health (IECBH) as a broader, more holistic term that includes mental health, trauma-informed care, and substance use; infant and early childhood *mental* health (IECMH) is a major component of behavioral health, and there is a national movement to develop a workforce and payment for services provided by individuals who are trained in IECMH competencies (we refer to these as IECMH practitioners and IECMH services). This distinction between behavioral health vs. mental health follows the Department of Health's (DOH's) Behavioral Health Administration, which includes the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division, Adult Mental Health Division, Developmental Disabilities Division, and the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division.

Progress to Date in Advancing IECBH Plan Activities

Below are the four areas of the Plan with a list of items that have been completed or where work is substantially underway for each.

Systems & Policy

- The DOH Family Health Services Division (FHSD) agreed to be the temporary home for IECBH in Hawai'i, and we are working towards a permanent agency home.
- A financial sustainability workgroup was convened, and a [paper](#) developed, identifying key recommendations for funding for IECMH services. This workgroup researched other states' legislation and administrative rules to review "imminent risk" and Medicaid diagnosis/billing codes for IECMH services so that our youngest keiki can receive services prior to having a diagnosis.
- Two years of funding for an IECBH Plan Coordinator was obtained from the DOH, the Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF), and the Early Childhood Action Strategy (ECAS).
- Members of the plan advisory group worked on the development and editing of a national [briefing paper](#) on the integration of IECMH into Early Intervention Services. The work that Hawai'i has done to date was spotlighted in the document.

Marketing, Outreach, & Community Education

- Several free, nationally available materials on child development, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s “Learn the Signs, Act Early” website materials, Milestone Tracker app, and resources were shared with childcare service providers, health care providers including primary care, and families.

Workforce Development

- Federal funding was secured for a behavioral health phone consultation line for pediatric and primary care providers to access IECMH expertise in treating their patients, ages 3-21.
- In 2021, the early childhood workforce grew with an additional 30 people trained in IECMH and trauma-informed approaches as part of peer learning communities. The workforce now has more front-line workers equipped to respond in real time, and to identify when more support is needed for children and families.
- An additional 39 Promising Minds Fellows, a program of the Association for Infant Mental Health Hawaii (AIMH HI), have completed specialized training and have expertise in infant mental health competencies, reflective supervision, and consultation. This program is ongoing and a third cohort is now in the works with a specialization in reflective supervision.
- Community knowledge of IECMH, wellness, and resilience was strengthened through two Kahewai Summits focusing on trauma-informed care with more than 300 attendees each year representing early childhood settings in Hawai‘i. The summits offered a professional development opportunity and a connection event for those in the early childhood field. The Kahewai Summit is an extension of the work of ACEs Connection Hawai‘i and Ke Ala Ho‘aka and Associates, and is presented annually in partnership with HCF, DOH, and the Hawai‘i Association of Independent Schools.
- Hawai‘i was selected to work with ZERO TO THREE/Georgetown University, which is providing two years of technical assistance (TA) related to developing an IECMH Consultation model. A cross-sector Hawai‘i team, including representatives from several child- and family-serving state agencies and private sector organizations who are interested in being early adopters, was created to receive this TA and has been meeting for the past several months.
- Curriculum/training modules on an IECMH approach in pediatrics and primary care were developed and delivered in Hawai‘i through a series of sessions (e.g., Project ECHO).

Programs & Services

- The TA effort is focusing on IECMH consultation integration in DOH Home Visiting (HV), Early Intervention Section (EIS), and child care settings.
- Through the Promising Minds initiative, HCF has developed a pilot project to integrate IECMH into community-based primary care settings.

IECBH Plan Priority Areas for 2022-23

Building on the activities completed to date, we have identified three focus areas for the upcoming year. These will help expand the qualified workforce of those who can provide IECMH services and identify ways that these services can be paid for and provided to Hawai‘i’s families:

Systems & Policy

1. Based on the priorities of the Hawai'i Medicaid agency and members of the financial sustainability workgroup, identify how Medicaid and other funding can be used to reimburse IECMH services.

Workforce Development

2. Continue to grow the IECMH workforce in Hawai'i through partnerships between public and private sector organizations. One example is that graduates of the AIMH HI Promising Minds Fellows Program, who are eligible for Infant Mental Health Endorsement, will provide reflective supervision consultation and get additional certification in Child-Parent Psychotherapy, which in turn will help to expand the services for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and their families.
3. Continue to participate in the TA offered by ZERO TO THREE to develop a multi-sector IECMH Consultation model for Hawai'i that increases access to promotion, prevention, and treatment services. This will be accomplished by strengthening workforce development/training/competencies, financing, data, and screening and referral strategies. The TA team will launch and test the IECMH Consultation model in state programs and settings, such as DOH HV and EIS, and child care.

A strong mental health system includes services for babies, toddlers, preschoolers, and their families including prenatally through age 5. We envision access to mental health services for all of Hawai'i's keiki and their families which will make for healthier families and stronger communities. We need your help to realize this goal. Please reach out to anyone on the Advisory Group where we might work together or if you have ideas to share!

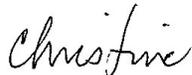
Yours in Partnership,
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