

# Proclamation

Mental health is essential to a person's emotional and physical well-being and quality of life. By treating mental illnesses properly and ensuring that individuals receive the best possible care, everyone benefits, including Hawai'i families and communities.

Depression is one of the most common forms of mental illness. By 2020, the World Health Organization projects that depression will be the second leading cause of disability worldwide, regardless of race, age or gender. Furthermore, physical conditions such as coronary heart disease and insomnia are shown to be more prevalent among individuals who suffer from depression and other forms of mental illness.

Many people who suffer from mental illness resist treatment because they believe it is not serious, can be treated themselves or that it is a personal weakness rather than a serious medical condition. Fortunately, several stakeholders, including Mental Health Kōkua, Mental Health America of Hawai'i and the state Department of Health's Adult Mental Health and Child and Adolescent Mental Health divisions, are working together to decrease the stigma of mental illness, increase public awareness and enhance services. These and other efforts have produced positive results, with Hawai'i recently improving to 11<sup>th</sup> in the nation for mental health services. Building on this progress will be the action plan devised by the Mental Health Transformation Working Group, which was formed with a grant awarded to our state by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

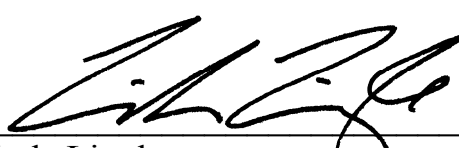
For more than 50 years, communities across the nation have observed Mental Health Awareness Month each May in order to promote mental wellness. This year's theme, "Get Connected," draws attention to the vital role social relationships play in a person's mental health and overall well-being. Several local organizations have planned events throughout the month, including Mental Health America of Hawai'i, which will recognize mental health leaders in the community at a luncheon on May 22 at the Japanese Cultural Center in Honolulu, and the Honolulu Academy of Arts, which will run a photographic exhibit by Michael Nye entitled "Fine Line: Mental Health/Mental Illness" from May 15-31.

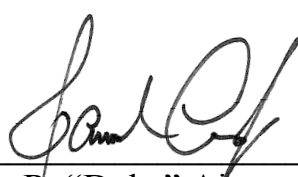
**THEREFORE, I, LINDA LINGLE, Governor, and I, JAMES R. "DUKE" AIONA, JR.,** Lieutenant Governor of the State of Hawai'i, do hereby proclaim the month of **May 2008**, as

## **MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH**

in Hawai'i, and encourage our citizens, government agencies, public and private institutions, businesses, and schools to participate in statewide efforts to increase access to much-needed services for members of our 'ohana who suffer from mental illness.

**DONE** at the State Capitol, in the Executive Chambers, Honolulu, State of Hawai'i, this thirtieth day of April 2008.

  
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Linda Lingle  
Governor, State of Hawai'i

  
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James R. "Duke" Aiona, Jr.  
Lieutenant Governor, State of Hawai'i