HOPE SERVICES HAWAII AWARDED CARES ACT FUNDING FOR TELEHEALTH AND BROADBAND SERVICE

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HONOLULU—HOPE Services Hawaii, a non-profit organization based in Hilo, Hawaii, was awarded CARES Act funding for telehealth and broadband access to service the homeless community on Hawaii Island. These COVID-19 preventative efforts are a continuation of improving care to reduce the severity of health issues and overall health services costs.

The project will facilitate immediate access to primary and specialty care via telehealth and mobile wi-fi hotspots for the homeless population on Hawaii Island currently living on the streets and in shelters. This service resulted from a collaboration of many of community stakeholders focused on digital equity and the digital divide highlighted by COVID-19.

“We recognize that broadband access is critical to all of our communities, however, not all of our residents have the ability to receive telehealth services,” said Gov. David Ige. “We are proud to support HOPE Services with CARES Act funding to deliver COVID-19 health screenings to vulnerable homeless communities on Hawaii Island.”

“Through the work of the Hawaii Broadband Hui, which we helped convene for more than 30 weeks since March 2020, community stakeholders have come together to address the digital disparities brought to light by the pandemic. This project is great testament to the collaborative efforts of our community,” said Mike McCartney, director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism. “This project gives us a glimpse of what is possible for Hawaii, with the onset of the emerging digital economy.”

“We’re truly grateful for this partnership and the critical resources to bridging the gap of healthcare for our houseless community through telehealth. What an amazing team effort,” said Brandee Menino, chief executive officer of HOPE Services Hawaii.

“This grant is so important to help some of our most vulnerable populations during this pandemic.

I've been impressed with HOPE Service's commitment to improving access to care, especially to avoid the spread of COVID, by leveraging telehealth and technology," said Dr. Christina Higa, co-director of the Pacific Basin Telehealth Resource Center, Social Science Research Institute (SSRI), University of Hawaii, Mānoa.

For more information about Broadband Hui and the Hawaii Broadband Initiative please contact burt.q.lum@hawaii.gov.

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About the Hawaii Broadband Initiative (HBI)
The Hawaii Broadband Initiative (HBI) works toward establishing key strategic infrastructure and programs to lower the cost barrier for transpacific fiber optic cables to land in Hawaii, to coordinate efforts to create a robust broadband network throughout the state and to establish digital equity for all residents to thrive in the digital economy.

About the Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism (DBEDT)
DBEDT is Hawaii's resource center for economic and statistical data, business development opportunities, energy and conservation information, and foreign trade advantages. DBEDT's mission is to achieve a Hawaii economy that embraces innovation and is globally competitive, dynamic and productive, providing opportunities for all Hawaii's citizens. Through its attached agencies, the department fosters planned community development, creates affordable workforce housing units in high-quality living environments, and promotes innovation sector job growth.

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