



For Immediate Release August 3, 2016 **Contact: Stacy Wong** (808) 521-8961

Hawaii State Senate President Ronald D. Kouchi and Representative Dee Morikawa Named Healthcare Association of Hawaii's State Legislators of the Year

Honolulu – The Healthcare Association of Hawaii (HAH) is pleased to announce the recipients of its 2016 state legislative awards. Each year, HAH recognizes one senator and one representative for their efforts to support access to quality care for all of Hawaii's people. Lawmakers will be honored at the Healthcare Association of Hawaii's Awards and Scholarship Gala on Saturday, October 29.



Senator Ronald D. Kouchi State Senator of the Year Award

Senator Kouchi was chosen for this award because of his steadfast commitment to providing affordable, quality care not only to people in Kauai but across the state. Senator Kouchi was instrumental in securing funding for an increase in Medicaid reimbursements for nursing homes, the first that these facilities have received in almost seven years.

The state funds provided for this increase will be matched with federal funds, helping to infuse Hawaii's long-term care facilities with more than

\$4.7 million in funding to help keep their doors open serving seniors, indigent individuals, and young adults recovering from substance abuse. He has also shown a strong support for other programs that help HAH member facilities, including the Sustainability Programs that allow both hospitals and long-term care facilities to draw down matching federal dollars to help improve access to services for low-income or uninsured Hawaii residents.

In addition, he is a strong advocate for seniors, supporting bills that resulted in an additional \$3 million in funding for kupuna care this session. As always, Senator Kouchi remains a steadfast advocate for ensuring that rural residents in Hawaii—like those on Kauai—are able to access critical and preventive services that promote population health.

Senator Kouchi is the current president of the Hawaii Senate. He represents Kaua'i & Ni'ihau.

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Representative Dee Morikawa State Representative of the Year Award

Representative Morikawa has been a tireless champion for our state's most underserved residents as the Chair of the House Human Services Committee. She has overseen the passage of a number of critical bills for HAH members that help to increase Medicaid reimbursements to facilities across the state.

Her leadership on those issues has helped hospitals and long-term care facilities to be more financially stable, keeping their doors open to all residents to access high-quality, affordable health services. She has also served as a key advocate as the Vice Chair of the House Health Committee, supporting initiatives such as the durable medical equipment licensing program that will help to improve outcomes for seniors on neighbor islands.

Through it all, Representative Morikawa has not only been an effective advocate, but also a warm and welcoming presence that is so rare in politics.

Representative Morikawa represents Lehua, Koloa and Waimea on Kaua'i, and Ni'ihau.

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ABOUT the Healthcare Association of Hawaii

The Healthcare Association of Hawaii's 180 member organizations include the acute care hospitals in Hawaii, the skilled nursing facilities, the Medicare-certified home health agencies, all hospices, all assisted living facilities, durable medical equipment suppliers and home infusion/pharmacies. Members represent healthcare providers from throughout the continuum including case management, air and ground ambulance, blood bank, dialysis, and more. For more information please visit www.hah.org. Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter @HealthcareHAH.