

## Hawaii homeless shelter wins \$1.5M federal grant

AUDREY McAVOY, Associated Press

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HONOLULU (AP) — A Honolulu homeless shelter has received a \$1.5 million federal grant to bring psychiatrists to people living on the streets and otherwise help the chronic homeless.

One program the grant will pay for is an initiative to have psychiatrists to accompany outreach teams visiting people living in parks and on the streets, Connie Mitchell, the Institute for Human Service's executive director, said Friday.

"If we identify someone on the street that might really have a problem and we're not being able to treat the person or convince them to come to the office, then we have somebody right there to do an assessment with them," Mitchell said.

The University of Hawaii's medical school will jointly run the initiative and send its residents out on the outreach missions.

"It's something we've really been pushing. We don't want to wait until they come, until they have the notion to come to IHS," Mitchell said.

The funds, to be paid out over three years by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, will also help different service providers to work together.

Half of the money will go to organizations working with IHS like The Queen's Medical Center, the Legal Aid Society, and groups like Hina Mauka, which provides substance abuse treatment.

"Everybody's lost funding and it's really a way to give a little bit back to the people who are doing the job anyway, but also to expand services," Mitchell said.

Hawaii has the third-highest ratio of homeless people to residents of any state after Nevada and Oregon, according to the National Alliance to End Homelessness. Most of Hawaii's unsheltered live in Honolulu.

Gov. Neil Abercrombie earlier this year announced a 90-day plan to help homeless find housing. His administration outlined a list of efforts, including improving access to substance abuse treatment services and supporting the chronically mentally ill who need mental health care.

Mitchell said the plan has helped workers direct their attention to getting people shelter.

"The outreach is really focused on 'How can we help you get back into housing.' It's not about handing someone some food or handing someone toiletries," she said.



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