

A One Stop Shop Dedicated to Win the Fight Against Addiction
By Dr. Hannah Preston-Pita

We have all been impacted by the effects of addiction; it does not discriminate. Whether it be a loved one, family member or friend; the depredation of addiction negatively impacts our community physically, emotionally, and psychologically. Big Island Substance Abuse Council (BISAC) is committed to not only help individuals and their families out of addiction, but we are also here to celebrate individuals who have triumphed and transformed their lives by living substance free. Since 1964, BISAC has been providing substance use services on Hawai'i Island. Our mission has been to inspire positive change and provide individuals and their families with opportunities to heal, thrive, and reclaim their lives. BISAC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and a CARF accredited organization.

In the 58 years of providing services, BISAC's positive reputation has been a long-standing influence in the community, providing a comprehensive continuum of substance abuse treatment and mental health services. Most recently, BISAC started a rural health care hub in Kohala to provide another option for individuals who require treatment and are faced with barriers to services such as geographical isolation and transportation. In September of 2021, the program began providing outpatient services, training opportunities for community members, and outreach events. The success of this project has encouraged BISAC to look for additional hubs in other rural underserved communities on Hawai'i Island.

In response to a growing need for services, BISAC is currently working with the County of Hawai'i to develop a complex dedicated to servicing our community member needs. BISAC's plans for a one stop behavioral health campus at the old Hilo Memorial Hospital has gained momentum with the need for substance use treatment and mental health services increasing exponentially from the impacts of Covid-19. Our 5-year plan for this campus has prompted us to pivot and think about other ways to address this need in the meantime, even with little resources available. BISAC is also working on a current long-term lease with the County of Hawai'i, which would increase treatment capacity significantly. Our vision is to utilize micro-units to help with motivational enhancement and non-medical stabilization services for individuals needing services. In addition, we aim to further support BISAC's strategic plan to increase bed space capacity and add other services such as detox and medically assisted treatment in the future one stop shop behavioral health campus.

On July 30, 2022, our 8th Annual Summer Jam event returns to the Afook-Chinen Civic Auditorium. The success of the 2019 Summer Jam firmly established the event as a 'Go To' summer experience and drew in over 2000 attendees who enjoyed a day of family friendly fun! Summer Jam builds awareness and tears down the stigma surrounding people in recovery. This

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year, due to COVID-19, we're making every effort to safeguard the public and their safety. Please join us as we celebrate our work with our community.

This editorial is brought to you by Community First a 501 (c) 3 non-profit founded by the late Barry Taniguchi in 2014 to serve as a neutral forum for the community to come together, and as a catalyst for solutions to improve health and access to health care. Through its programs, Community First hopes to shift the model of healthcare from reactively treating disease, to proactively caring for the health of every person on Hawai'i Island. For more information, please visit our website at www.communityfirsthawaii.org or Facebook and Instagram pages at @communityfirsthawaii.