What is Project Kealahou?
This report highlights a new program for Hawai`i’s youth and their families. Project Kealahou (PK; meaning “A New Pathway”) is a federally-funded System of Care project that supports a cross-agency, collaborative approach for serving girls with complex needs. PK is a family and youth centered effort to help youth and their caregivers keep youth at home, in school, out of trouble and leading balanced, connected and responsible lives in the community.

What does PK do?
PK enhances existing services by providing youth and family with intensified, community-based, outreach and support. Project Kealahou consists of a set of diverse supports and services that are not traditionally available in standard public mental health services, including youth peer supports, parent peer supports, youth and family group activities, Girls Circle Groups, self-advocacy skills-building and cultural healing activities, as part of an overall program of trauma-informed care and gender-responsive services.

PK also impacts the macro level of the System of Care via sustainable enhancement of SOC infrastructure through the development of a cross-agency planning and oversight committee and the implementation of cross-agency workforce development job orientations and trainings for SOC provider of Child Welfare Services, Education, Juvenile Justice and Mental Health.

About Project Kealahou (PK)
PK is a Department of Health (DOH) Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division (CAMHD) System of Care initiative funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) from 2009 to 2016.

Locations: PK’s community-based services are available to youth in Honolulu, Central and Windward Oahu.

Numbers Served: PK aims to serve 400 girls and their families from 2011 through 2015.

Collaborative partners: The Hawai`i Department of Education (HIDOE), the Juvenile Justice programs of the State Judiciary System (i.e., Family Court, Detention Home, Youth Correctional Facility and Probation Division), and the Department of Human Services’ (DHS) Child Welfare Services (CWS) Division.

Target Population: Females ages 11-21, who have experienced significant negative life events.

Data Sources: Data comes from standardized intake and semi-annual follow up interviews with PK youth and their caregivers.

The figure above depicts the number of providers representing Child Welfare Services (CWS), Department of Education (DOE), Detention Home (DH), Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility (HYCF) and Mental Health (MH) who were trained by PK from 2011 – 2014
How are System of Care Enhancements being Sustained?

Since 2012, PK has developed a sustainable infrastructure primarily through substantial investment in workforce development to better support a culturally-sensitive, gender-responsive, trauma-informed, youth-guided and family-driven system of care for youth and their families. To that end, over 600 staff from System of Care (SOC) partners in Child Welfare, Education, Juvenile Justice and Mental Health provider agencies have been trained by PK on cutting-edge and evidence-based practices including Girls Circle support groups, LGBTQI2SPA treatment issues, Trauma-Informed Care, Vicarious Trauma, Self-Care and Trauma-Focused Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy.

PK has also enhanced the System of Care infrastructure through the development of an Governing Council, comprised of executive-level representation from SOC partners as well as family and youth representatives, who meet monthly to improve collaboration, integration and sustainability of the SOC. In addition, numerous memoranda of agreement (MOA) have been implemented as well, which define and assure the types and levels of resources, including braided funding, being shared among SOC partners in order to improve service quality, integration and outcomes.

Who does PK Serve?

PK served 145 girls from September 2011 to April 2014 who reported:

- An average age of 16 years old
- Diverse ethnic backgrounds (See chart below)
- Receiving intensive services from multiple agencies concurrently, typically mental health, family/girls’ court, probation and school.
- Experiencing problems with mood, substance abuse, conduct, running away, attempted suicide and physical/sexual abuse.

Why a System of Care?

About two-thirds of children and youth with mental health challenges in the United States do not receive the mental health services they need. In many communities, services for youth with mental health challenges are unavailable, unaffordable, or insufficient, leaving these youth at risk for difficulties in school and/or the community. The System of Care recognizes the importance of family, school and community and seeks to promote the potential of every child and youth, regardless of mental health challenge.

For more information, contact Project Director Tia Roberts at 733-9396 (Tia.Roberts@doh.hawaii.gov) or Lead Evaluator Edward Suarez at 733-9344 (Edward.Suarez@doh.hawaii.gov).