

DRUG ADDICTION SERVICES OF HAWAII, Inc.

HUI HO `OMAIKAI IKA POE O HAWAI`I MARCH & APRIL 2003 NEWSLETTER

Website: <http://www.geocities.com/quarberg/DASH/index.htm>

Vol. 2, No. 2

This is our second newsletter in 2003. We are still seeking articles, stories, news events, poems, and other items of interest to our na haumana and their families for our future newsletters. The deadline for submissions is the 15th of the month before the newsletter distributed. Our next deadline is April 15th. You can leave your submissions for me at the front desk at anytime. We are also still looking for volunteers to be writers/reporters for future newsletters. – New Newsletter Editor: Cricket

YOUR DASHBOARD!

Your Dash-Board a.k.a. your Haumana Advisory Board (H.A.B. for short) is here for you! And we are ready, willing and able to listen, and help answer your questions and suggestions. Basically we want to hear from you and be your voice whenever you need us.

Among our tasks so far, we have created and hung a new and larger bulletin board in the lobby area here at Dash. Which means more space, more info. and more help for you. Look for current and upcoming events, such as Haumana picnics and other important information regarding groups and DASH policies.

As your board we are also working on other things as well, such as the new Community Resource files where you will be able to find the names, phone numbers and locations of the many other important resources in our community.

If you have a question or problem or just need someone to help that understands where you are at, just ask us. We are here for you, our fellow na Haumana. Board members are: Cricket, Linda C., Chris C., Gena G., and Laura V. You can drop us a line in the HAB Advisory box (in the office behind Mario), or feel free to talk to any of us in person. We'll also be introducing ourselves in person by stopping by the various groups to say "ALOHA!"

Rocky's Philosophy

Wisdom of the Day:

You should take responsibility for yourself, your thoughts, and your actions. You make it happen, you make it real, you are responsible for the outcome of the situation at hand.

Be more thoughtful for what you do or say because you are part of a society and this is your moment for expression.

The spotlight is on YOU!

Computer Giveaway Program

The Beaumont Foundation will be giving out almost \$400 million in computer equipment starting in 2003. Information on individual grants is online, but person interested in those grants must apply by calling 1-866-505-2667. Please note that persons with disabilities and those who are homebound because of disability or illness are especially encouraged to apply for these individual grants. The website for the Beaumont Foundation is:

www.bmtfoundation.com/grants/

The focus on is on delivering equipment where it will directly benefit under-served citizens.

DASH Newsletter - March. & April Issue - March 12, 2003

My Story

Every day I wake up and remind myself of how fortunate I am to be alive, in relatively good health, and I have a place to call home with the two people I love most in the world. This must sound corny, or at least boring. I am sure to the average person it does sound trite, but then again, I am not an average person.

It has taken me 36 years to finally realize I am far from average. Coming to the realization was an enormous battle with myself. I was one who thought people should not succumb to drug addiction. I even had a problem with the “addiction” part of the equation. However, as the years rolled by I realized I was under the influence of opiates the majority of every waking moment. After all, the disease of addiction can master the part of your brain that is responsible for telling you that you are OK; and doing all the right things.

My disease had me believing I was on top of my game. I could be all alone, which was the way I loved to be, and be perfectly content. However, underneath the cunning performances I called my life, I was growing tired...tired of not understanding why I could not be the average person getting on the bus to go to work. I had no job to go to. I had been calling Kamamalu Park my home for over a year. The term “homeless” did not register as a reality for me. Oh how cleverly I had fooled myself...me, my only friend.

This disease does render those stricken powerless. Simply exerting willpower just does not work when fighting something our brain and heart tells us we love like no other; our lover and our dearest friend; our utopia. First we must accept the realization of the dichotomy existing within us, and I had finally done just that. I knew the day I walked into D.A.S.H. in December 1995, I was truly ready to face what I had done with my life. I knew I wanted to salvage what little was left of my botched-up life. I knew I wanted to be the one getting on the bus with all the other “average” folks instead of the one watching through a nod.

I showed up for my life once I decided to listen and be truthful with myself. It was not easy the first year at D.A.S.H.....I still had a very strong will calling the shots, even though I would argue with anyone that I was doing all that was asked of me. It takes so long to recognize the old familiar sound of “self-will” talking incessantly to your mind. It is the most natural thing to answer the commands of those words for it is something I have done the majority of my life. So, the first year was a battle of wills, so to speak.

I had been on methadone before, as well as many treatment facilities. Finally, I started listening to what was being said by those giving the groups. I made sure I attended all of my scheduled counselor appointments and group sessions. Things began to start making sense to me. I had a wonderful counselor named Carmel and I attended her groups for years to come. She said she believed in me and hearing that, was a first for me. I kept on trying to face life with a new agenda; to simply show up and listen.

(*CONTINUE “My Story”*)

I have been on D.A.S.H. for over 7 years now. I have been on a 6 take-home status for over 4 of those years. Showing up for my life was the hardest step I have ever taken. What has made those steps possible for me was having a good and solid support network. I am very lucky to have my partner and my child who believe in me and support my recovery. I truly believe once I saw the innocence in the face of a child, who truly needed me, my heart changed. I wanted to be someone he could be proud of and that required that I at least learn to try and accept myself. It certainly has not been an easy task, but one I knew I had to undertake.

It was not that terribly hard to stop using drugs for me, but it was hard to learn how to live without them. In fact, I still have problems in the area of learning how to live, after thirty years of being in a drug-induced world. It is important to have people to talk and relate to because with this disease, being alone is not healthy or constructive, even though the disease tells us otherwise. I can say this with profound conviction for I was pitifully lost in the abyss of addiction. Methadone became the light I desperately needed within that dark reality. With methadone and D.A.S.H., I have gained the tools I needed and a means to re-enter the fabric of a positive and prosperous new life.

I still have moments of becoming overwhelmed with life. In fact I have more than I care to admit, but I utilize what I have come to understand is a life saving force form me...a great support network, involving myself within the principles of D.A.S.H., and seeing my therapist regularly. With all these tools, I have not wavered from my goal of being someone my son can be proud of. I am not saying it has not been an easy and "temptation free" task, but I will say it is a task I will not waiver from. Hopefully, my journey will continue to be productive and positive. Hopefully, life will shine on me with grace and ease. I know I will never stop working for the recovery that has given me the hope I thought was lost so long ago. Hopefully one day people like me, will not be frowned upon as the "once a junkie always a junkie." Hopefully there will be a new and more universal understanding of those like me. I believe with all my heart, that we must hold people accountable for their recovery and not their disease.

Written By: Linda C.

Ka mana'o pono

There is a *RED BOOK* by the fax machine up front with this title on it. It is an exact replica of what the Hui has. The title means "good thoughts," so anytime anything special happens with either the staff, haumana or D.A.S.H., please feel free to record it on the date it happened. That way, we have a record of our positive events, feelings and thoughts...that will be very nice to look back upon. Its also your way of becoming immortalized! So choose your words well! Anyone can write in the book, even guests!

Hep C News !!!

Congratulations to the Hep C Resolution passing the Senate Health Sub-Committee!!!

Thanks to testimony supporting Senate Resolution No. SCR 16

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO DEVELOP PUBLIC HEALTH STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE HEPATITIS C PROBLEM

Many letters were received on this issue. A number of the letters were also from outer islands. All of the letters were in support of this very important Hepatitis Resolution. There were not any opposed to SCR 16 and it passes the committee with one addition. Karla Hays, State Hepatitis Coordinator testified in support of SCR 16 for the DOH. Phyllis J. Baumwell, Kaiser's Director of Gov. Affairs, testified in support of SCR 16 and suggested they add a concern about firemen, first responders and health care workers. Two letters were even sent from the Hepatitis C Organizational Friends and Advocates in Florida! Linda Wong, the facilitator of HepCATS, the only public Hep C Support Group here in Hawaii, also sent a letter in support; and Steve Kersker, Chair of the Tampa Bay, Florida, Hepatitis Task Force, also sent in a letter in support of the resolution.

Ken Akinaka also testified and in the closing of his testimony had this to say:

“ The cost to our public health care system will be much greater in the future if people are not being provided adequate Hepatitis C prevention education, testing and treatment. Fewer than 20% of physicians in Hawaii have reported HCV. Only 12 physicians have prescribed interferon therapy for HCV as of last year.

SCR 16 Hepatitis C Resolution is very important to the people of Hawaii and to the State's Health Care system. The State's plan to address this epidemic needs to have community, expert and legislative oversight to ensure that we are properly addressing this epidemic now.

Too often, we are waiting for Federal dollars to take care of our community and professional responsibilities regarding a health care issue. In this case, waiting for Federal dollars to address this epidemic will actually cost Hawaii more money.

We need to start informing people who are infected with this virus that they cannot wait until they feel ill to seek proper medical care. Most people will not feel ill until it is too late to do anything about it! People with end-stage liver disease often lose their employment and health care insurance plans before they die. This means that many of them will use the State's Health Care Plans or the emergency rooms for their medical needs.

Finding people who are infected with HCV and educating them about the danger of drinking alcohol and the need to be vaccinated for Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B, will actually save the State money and lives. Persons infected with hepatitis C serve as a source of transmission to others and are at risk of developing chronic liver disease, liver cancer, and other HCV-related diseases, such as Type II diabetes, auto – immune diseases, and other chronic conditions that can lead to liver failure. While there is not a vaccine for hepatitis C, new treatments available can eliminate the virus or slow disease progression.

(More on Hepatitis ahead)

Misha Cohen Telephone Consultation

Dear Colleagues, Associates and Friends,

My practice now has an expanded capability for me to provide telephone consultations with **HCV** patients and their medical practitioners regarding how to most effectively include Asian medicine in their treatment plans. Beneficial results for the patient have been achieved by direct referral, or in many instances, by consulting directly with their MD, DOM, L.Ac., Naturopath, or other professional to co-design their treatment plan.

I specialize in Asian medicine, often complementing western modalities in the treatment of complex infectious diseases.

Often an HCV patient is co-infected with HIV, with which I have extensive experience, as well as with other complex conditions including cancer support and gastrointestinal disorders.

If I may be of service by providing a telephone consultation with you as client or as practitioner, or with client and practitioner together, please contact me. Please email me directly at TCMPaths@aol.com, with a copy to my assistant Rosalie at TCMclinicSF@earthlink.net. You will receive a prompt reply to your inquiry. Thank you.

Yours in health,
Misha Ruth Cohen, OMD, L. Ac.
Clinic Director, Chicken Soup Chinese Medicine
Faculty, UCSF Institute for Health and Aging

Hepatitis Integration into HIV/AIDS/STD, Substance Abuse & Correctional Health Programs

Dr. Joanna Buffington, MD
Monday, March 31, 2003
1:00 – 4:00 PM

Central Union Church Social Hall, 1660 S. Beretania St.
Light refreshments will be served

Dr Joanna Buffington, who is the program operations manager for the Hepatitis C Coordinators and the funded viral hepatitis integration projects from CDC, will be making a site visit to Hawaii on her way to a hepatitis conference in Australia later this month. She has offered to give a presentation on the integration of hepatitis into public health.

RSVP to Karla Hays by Wednesday, March 26, 2003 #733-9116

" METHADONE IS RECOVERY "
meetings

When: Friday's @ D.A.S.H.

Time: 9:00 to 10:00 a.m.

Do you know?

Hepatitis A & B vaccinations for persons infected with Hepatitis C who do not have health insurance coverage are available free through the Department of Health!

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the Hepatitis A & B vaccinations for Hepatitis C infected persons as they **can become very ill if they are infected with these other diseases.**

Call the following POINTS OF CONTACTS at Dept. of Health for a referral & further information:

Oahu: Point Of Contact - Barbara Brouillet;
733-9281, Diamond Head Clinic

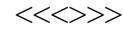
Kauai: Lihue; Point Of Contact - Sally Jo Manea; at 241-3563; Dept.of Health

(or Lihue, Tues from 9am-4pm only, 241-3387, Dept.of Health)

Kapaa; Point Of Contact -Jim McNulty Thurs.
2pm-6pm only, 823-0787;

Maui: POC Takako Nakaaki or Maile Hardwick, 984-2129; Dept.of Health

Big Island: Point Of Contact - Lynn 974-4247,
Dept.of Health



Hep C Support Group

The HepCATS support group for those with Hepatitis C has a new day and location. Starting in April it will be held every fourth **TUESDAY** of the month in at 7 PM to 9 PM. They plan to meet at the Life Foundation on Ala Moana Blvd. *Call 221-6204 after 4/1/03 to confirm the actual new location of this group.*

Join them in a friendly and relaxing setting. Family members are also encouraged to attend!

DON'T FORGET:

Get Tested for Hep C or HIV

Jill Teruya, RN, EIS Program Supervisor, is still giving ***Free Hepatitis C antibody test (or HIV test)*** at our DASH Oahu Clinic. You will need to know if you have been infected with these viruses. Please see her and ask to be tested for Hep C. Many people do not know that they are infected because many people with Hep C do not have any pain or other symptoms until it is too late to be treated.

See Ken Akinaka if you are interested in hepatitis C treatment or if you just want more information.

Coming up: Laura's Puzzle Page
From Puzzle Pages from A to Z with hidden solutions. Vantage Press, New York...1995