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STATE OF HAWAII
HAWAII CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM OVERSIGHT COMMISSION
E HUIKALA A MA'EMA'E NŌ
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December 9, 2024

Ms. Cathi Ho Schar, FAIA, Director
University of Hawaii Community Design Center
2410 Campus Road, Room 101A
Honolulu, HI 96821

Re: Breaking Cycles: Alternative Model for Rehabilitation and Restorative Justice on
O'ahu

Dear Ms. Cathi Ho Schar,

The Hawaii Correctional System Oversight Commission (HCSOC) unequivocally endorses the findings and recommendations outlined in the University of Hawaii Community Design Center's (UHCDC) comprehensive report, *Breaking Cycles: An Alternative Model for Rehabilitation & Restorative Justice*. This groundbreaking work provides a transformative vision for correctional reform in Hawaii, and we call upon the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) to ensure its recommendations are embedded in all jail planning without delay or compromise.

The *Breaking Cycles* report addresses critical and long-standing deficiencies within Hawaii's correctional system, including inadequate infrastructure, the absence of trauma-informed design, and the lack of culturally responsive rehabilitation programs. It provides clear, actionable steps to replace the outdated Oahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC) with a facility that reflects modern standards of justice, rehabilitation, and community well-being. The Commission had the opportunity to collaborate closely with UHCDC's team, particularly during the Breaking Cycles Symposium and the subsequent Community of Practice meetings. We are deeply impressed by the team's dedication and the meticulous effort invested in producing this comprehensive report.

The Commission was established to ensure transparency, support safe conditions for employees, people in custody, and detainees, and provide positive reform towards a rehabilitative and therapeutic correctional system, and therefore have a vested interest in the outcome of the *Breaking Cycles* report. This is not merely an optional upgrade but an essential reform to align our system with contemporary corrections principles and community expectations.

We wish to highlight the following imperatives from the report:

1. Trauma-Informed and Culturally Grounded Design:

The UHCDC's emphasis on trauma-informed architecture and culturally relevant programming acknowledges the unique needs of Hawaii's incarcerated population, particularly its disproportionate impact on Native Hawaiians. Facilities must reflect restorative justice principles that foster healing and reintegration, not perpetuate cycles of harm.

2. Comprehensive Continuum of Care:

The proposed models prioritize diversion, rehabilitation, and reentry strategies that extend beyond incarceration. Integrating health, housing, and social services into correctional planning will mitigate recidivism and promote public safety.

3. Stakeholder-Driven Approach:

The robust community engagement underpinning the report ensures the recommendations reflect the voices and needs of those most affected. Ignoring this inclusive process would be a disservice to the community and a breach of public trust.

4. Urgency of Implementation:

The report has laid a strong foundation for the immediate development of a Request for Proposal (RFP). Prolonged inaction risks exacerbating existing issues and missing a critical opportunity for reform.

The *Breaking Cycles* report is more than a roadmap; it is a mandate for change. It represents a collective vision for a correctional system that reflects the values of justice, rehabilitation, and community well-being. The DCR must seize this moment to demonstrate leadership and commitment to the people of Hawaii.

We remain committed to supporting the DCR in this endeavor and strongly encourage the timely implementation of the report's recommendations. In doing so, we urge the DCR to uphold its commitment (as noted in the alternative mission statement in the *Breaking Cycles* report) to support community equity, health, safety, and well-being by providing individuals in custody with rehabilitation-focused and culturally competent assessments, relationships, and personnel that address core needs and prevent future harm.

Thank you for this imperative work.

Sincerely,



Mark Patterson
Chair