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Office of the Governor
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Behavioral Health Services Officially Consolidated Under the Department of Health

On January 23rd, 2023, Acting Governor Talauega E. V. Ale signed Executive Order 004-23, an order to consolidate Behavioral Health Services under the Department of Public Health and amending Executive Order 0012-2016.

The Department of Human & Social Services and the Department of Public Health (DOH) shared the responsibilities of providing behavioral health services to the territory. DHSS-BH services that will be consolidated to DOH will include Community Mental Health for adults with severe mental illness, and children with serious emotional disturbances; Screening and State Opioid prevention, treatment and recovery for Opioid abuse or misuse; and Substance Abuse Treatment providing counseling to any individual referred for a substance use disorder, and education for individuals charged with Driving Under the Influence.

The merging of these two divisions under one umbrella was necessary for “optimal deployment of professionals and paraprofessionals, improving efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery, and eliminating duplicate services and lapses in coordination and interagency communications.” Effective January 1st, 2023, Governor Lemanu P. S. Mauga designated the Department of Health as the Single State Authority for substance abuse and mental health prevention and treatment services for the Territory of American Samoa.

Amendments to Executive Order 001-2016 Establishment of the American Samoa Behavioral Health Planning and Advisory Council, will remove all references to DHSS.

I would like to acknowledge Director Muavaefaatasi J Suisala and Director Motusa T. Nua for the collaborative effort in seeing this into fruition.,” commended Acting Governor Talauega. He continued, "Let us continue the good work in ensuring a smooth transition for both employees and patients."

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