

HAWAII

Virginia Pressler, MD, MBA, FACS

Director of Health

Hawaii Department of Health



Virginia Pressler is the director of health for the Hawaii State Department of Health. In that capacity, she oversees communicable diseases, disease outbreak control, family health, emergency medical services, chronic disease prevention and health promotion, developmental disabilities, environmental health, state laboratories, behavioral health, Hawaii State Hospital, alcohol and drug abuse, and other public health services. She also oversees a number of administratively attached agencies such as the State Health Planning and Development Agency, Office of Language Access, State Council on Developmental Disabilities, Executive Office on Aging, and others.

Previously, Pressler was executive vice president and chief strategic officer for Hawaii Pacific Health (HPH), a nonprofit healthcare network that includes Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women and Children, Straub Clinic and Hospital, Pali Momi Medical Center, and Wilcox Hospital and Kauai Medical Clinic on Kauai island.

Prior to joining Hawaii Pacific Health, Pressler's career included serving as deputy director of the Hawaii State Department of Health, president and CEO of the Queen's/HMSA Premier Plan, vice president at The Queen's Health Systems, director of surgical education at The Queen's Medical Center, associate professor of surgery at the John A. Burns School of Medicine, private practice in general surgery, and five years in management at Bank of Hawaii. Pressler holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Cornell University, and Master of Business Administration, Master of Science (physiology), and Doctor of Medicine degrees from the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

Pressler has been active in the community in a wide variety of volunteer roles including past board member and secretary of the YMCA, past board member of the Hawai'i Society of Clinical Oncology, chair of the Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii, past president of the Hawaii Pacific Division of the American Cancer Society and a national assembly delegate for the American Cancer Society. She is past chair of the Cancer Center of Hawaii and former vice chair of the Board of North Hawaii Community Hospital. She is an ex officio member of the board of the Hawaii Health System Corporation (HHSC), the Commission on Water Resource Management, the Hawaii Medical Education Council, and others. She is also on the board of the Employee Union Trust Fund. She has served on numerous state commissions and task forces. Pressler also served on a U.S. Congressional Commerce Committee on health information technology and served on the Advisory Committee on Infant Mortality for the Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius.

As deputy director of the Hawaii State Department of Health, Pressler initiated the Tobacco Trust Fund, the Healthy Hawaii Initiative, the Hawaii Outcomes Institute, and the Hawaii Uninsured Project and helped initiate the Hawaii Comprehensive Cancer Control Program, serving as chair from 2003 to 2005.

Pressler is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Business Leadership Hawaii Lifetime Achievement Award, and awards from the Shidler College of Business, Hawaii Institute for Public Affairs, American Cancer Society St. George National Award, Planned Parenthood, Hawaii Medical Association, Healthcare Association of Hawaii, YWCA, University of Hawaii Distinguished Alumni, and others.