

## Health director grilled over layoffs

Posted: Jan 13, 2010 9:39 PM HST Updated: Jan 13, 2010 11:15 PM HST

By Jim Mendoza - [bio](#) | [email](#)

HONOLULU (HawaiiNewsNow) - State Health director Chiyome Fukino vehemently defended her department and the process of mandated layoffs. But House lawmakers grilled her on who decided who would lose their jobs to save the government money.

House Finance chairman Marcus Oshiro said it should have been Fukino's call. "She's not prepared because, number one, she didn't create the list of who's going to get laid off. That came from the governor's office. And, number two, they have no idea what the savings will be if you lay off these people," he said. But Fukino said she did have input, instructing department heads to determine how to run operations efficiently with fewer employees.

"Certainly, the department has the biggest onus of responsibility because we know and understand the programs the best. But we are all government and so we need to make that decision together," she said.

The Health department is the fourth largest state department in Hawaii, administering over 100 programs. More than three hundred positions were cut. An advocate for the developmentally disabled said the terminations will affect patient care. .

"If we don't invest today with what limited dollars we have and set priorities, that will mean in the future we will have to deal with a much larger problem that economically will drain the state even more," PHOCUSED Hawaii's Alex Santiago said..

The Health departments budget for fiscal 2011 is \$383 million. The details were left out of Wednesday's discussion...

Fukino goes before the House Finance and Health committees again in two weeks.

Copyright 2010 Hawaii News Now. All rights reserved.



Dr. Chiyome Fukino



Marcus Oshiro



Alex Santiago

