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**For Immediate Release**

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## **The Hawai'i Nurses' Association Announces Affiliation with The Office and Professional Employees International Union, AFL-CIO**

***Honolulu, HI (February 16)*** — The Hawai'i Nurses' Association (HNA) announced its affiliation with the Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU), AFL-CIO today. "Our affiliation with OPEIU is a landmark decision for us and signals our intention to take our place in organized labor," said HNA President Joan Craft, RN.

HNA recently withdrew from the United American Nurses (UAN), which was dissolved following a contentious internal dispute within UAN Affiliates in 2009. The HNA Board of Directors took action to dis-affiliate with UAN prior to its alleged merging with California Nurses Association (CNA)/National Nurses Organizing Committee (NNOC) in the fall of 2009. The newly formed group, "National Nurses United" (NNU) was founded in December 2009.

"Our members rejected CNA in previous attempts to organize HNA nurses, a time in HNA's recent past that was fraught with lawsuits and dissension," said HNA President Craft, RN. "It's a time for unity and solidarity and our members value autonomy and a democratic process," continued Craft. She said OPEIU was chosen after much research and interviewing of other AFL-CIO affiliates because they demonstrated these and other fine qualities and shared similar beliefs with the union.

The HNA Board of Directors voted unanimously to affiliate with the OPEIU in a meeting held on January 16, 2010. Top leaders from OPEIU traveled to Honolulu to speak to the board members and take part in the official signing of affiliation documents.

"I have the utmost respect for the Hawaii Nurses Association and we are honored they chose to affiliate with OPEIU. HNA will be a tremendous addition to the nursing contingent of our union," said Michael Goodwin, OPEIU International President.

The OPEIU was chartered in 1945 with more than 125,000 members and is one of the larger unions of the AFL-CIO. They have locals in every state, Puerto Rico and Canada. HNA was given the official local number, "OPEIU Local 50" because Hawaii is the 50th state.

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"We're pleased that HNA recognized the value of affiliating with an organization with a great reputation for servicing its members and allowing its locals the freedom to control their own destiny," said Walter Allen Jr., OPEIU International Vice President. Allen Jr. said OPEIU looks forward to providing resources to support HNA's success.

HNA Executive Director Patt A. Gibbs, Esq., said the Hawai'i Nurses' Association is proud of their long history of autonomy and activism. In fact, the union negotiated the first ever nurse agreement in the state of Hawaii. She said the selection process focused on the protection and welfare of HNA's more than 4,000 members and the union's core values and ethics. "If you do the research you will find that OPEIU ranks at the very top as a labor organization that ensures autonomous decision making and member level involvement in their union," said Gibbs, Esq.

Leaders of the Hawai'i Nurses' Association will attend the OPEIU National Convention in June 2010 for an official charter ceremony.

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HNA was founded in 1917 and is the largest union representing Hawaii's private sector RNs and health care workers. HNA is affiliated with the Office Employees International Union (OPEIU), an AFL-CIO affiliate.

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