



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR

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**NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION WEEK (SEPT. 9-15)
RAISES AWARENESS WITH STATEWIDE ACTIVITIES**

HONOLULU - To increase awareness about suicide prevention resources and support available to families, communities in Hawai'i and across the nation are collaborating to host events during National Suicide Prevention Week from Sept. 9 to 15, 2012. The week marks the days leading up to and after World Suicide Prevention Day on Monday, Sept. 10. This year's national theme is "Collaborations in Suicidology: Bridging the Disciplines."

"A suicidal death is difficult for friends, family, and loved ones to fathom," said Nancy Kern, DOH Suicide Prevention Coordinator. "There are often warning signs in the form of depression or a mental illness, but suicide can also seemingly strike out of nowhere. Regardless of the motivation behind it, suicide is the most extreme case of self-harm. For those who are contemplating such an act, know someone who might be at risk for suicide, or for those left behind, there are numerous resources available in Hawai'i."

Hawai'i state data on suicides:

- Hawai'i ranks 42nd nationally in its rate of suicide deaths (8th lowest rate in the nation).
- Suicide was the single leading cause of fatal injuries in Hawai'i over the 2007-2011 time period, with an increasing trend in the annual rate of suicide among Hawai'i residents.
 - Increasing trends were noticed for most age groups, except for residents 75 years and older.
 - Victim age was widely distributed, although almost all (95 percent) were 19 years or older.
 - Elderly residents (85 years and older) and those in the 45-54 year age range had the highest fatality rates.
 - Male victims outnumbered females by approximately 3-to-1.
- Fatality rates among O'ahu residents were 38 percent lower, compared to neighbor island residents; rates across neighbor island counties were similar.

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- The most common mechanism was by hanging or suffocation (49%), followed by firearm use (20 percent), poisonings (14 percent), and jumps from high places (10 percent).
- According to 2011 Youth Risk Behavior Survey data, Hawai'i high school students had the 9th highest self-reported prevalence of considering suicide (16 percent), the 2nd highest for making a plan (15 percent), the 16th highest for attempting (9 percent), and the 13th highest prevalence for being treated for a self-inflicted injury (3 percent) in the country. Data was available from 46 states for these comparisons; average prevalence was 15, 12, 8 and 3 percent, respectively.
- Among Hawai'i students, the prevalence of these risk factors was generally higher among female students.

National data on suicides:

- Suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in the United States, with one suicide occurring on average every 15.2 minutes.
- Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death among 15- to 24-years-olds.
- The elderly make up 12.6 percent of the population, but comprise 15.7 percent of all suicides.
- Approximately 900,000 Americans attempt suicide each year.
- It is estimated that five million living Americans have attempted to kill themselves.
- Every year in the United States, more than 17,000 men and women kill themselves with a gun, two-thirds more than the number who use a gun to kill another person.
- An estimated 4.6 million Americans are survivors of the suicide of a friend, family member, or loved one.

2012 SUICIDE PREVENTION (SP) WEEK STATEWIDE EVENTS & CONTACT INFORMATION

Hawai'i Island:

Lead agency for SP Week in Hilo: Department of Health (DOH) Hawai'i Family Guidance Center/Children and Adolescent Mental Health Division, Adult Mental Health Division, Community Mental Health Center.

Contact: Tracey Wise at (808) 974-4305 or tracey.wise@doh.hawaii.gov

Additional agencies collaborating on SP Week activities: Department of Education (DOE); Department of Health Adult Mental Health Division, Developmental Disabilities Division, Hawai'i Family Guidance Center; County of Hawai'i Office of Aging, Prosecutor's Office, Police Department; Care Hawai'i, Inc.; Hospice Hilo; Kokua Mental Health; HOPE; and Veteran's Administration.

Activities for SP Week in Hilo:

- The Hawaii Island East Side Task Force will participate by presenting five 'safeTALK' suicide education seminars in addition to a day of public awareness 'sign waving' conducted across the island. Local radio stations will enhance awareness through public service announcements.

Lead agency for SP Week in Kona: Nancy Sallee, Prevent Suicide Hawai'i Island Chair for Kona. Contact Nancy Sallee at 324-1815 or 333-8988 or orchid_isle_psychotherapy@yahoo.com.

Activities for SP Week in Kona:

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- **Sept. 9-15:** A series of articles on suicide and suicide prevention will be published during the week by *West Hawai'i Today* featuring physicians, agency care providers, private citizens, DOH and DOE staff involved with suicide prevention on the state level.
- **Friday, Sept. 14, at 6 p.m.:** A candlelight vigil will be held for suicide survivors at St. Michael's Catholic Church lawn in Kona.
- Kona members of the Prevent Suicide Task Force will provide suicide awareness presentations in classrooms at the local high schools in conjunction with students and counselors trained in suicide prevention.
- The Kona website for suicide prevention can be found at: <http://preventsuicidekona.com/>
The website provides information on suicide statistics, signs and symptoms of suicide ideation, intervention help, specific information on veteran and youth suicide, and local/state/national resources.

Maui:

Lead agency for SP Week: Prevent Suicide Maui County Task Force. Contact Ann Nakagawa at (808) 244-6491 or ann.nakagawa@mpd.net for activities planned. Additional agencies collaborating on SP Week activities: DOE; DOH Adult Mental Health Division; UH-Maui College; County of Maui-Office of Aging; Neighborhood Place; Maui Police Department; and Queen Liliuokalani Children's Center.

Activities for SP Week in Maui:

Kaua'i:

Lead agency for SP Week: Life's Bridges, Kaua'i. Contact: Gina Kaulukukui at (808) 651-6637 or rkaulukukui@hawaii.rr.com. Additional agencies collaborating on SP Week activities: Kaua'i Police Department; Queen Liliuokalani Children's Center - Kaua'i Unit; DOE; DOH Adult Mental Health Division and Public Health Nursing.

Activities for SP Week on Kaua'i:

- **Wednesday, Sept. 26:** A safeTALK training is scheduled for DOE staff on Kaua'i.
- **Friday-Saturday, Sept. 28-29:** The Prevent Suicide Kaua'i Task Force will host an ASIST Training.
- Members will promote the HOPES (Helping Our People End Suicide) campaign by distributing posters and bumper stickers around Kaua'i. Their memory quilt and website: preventsuicidekauai.org are being promoted by the Task Force. The Task Force will collaborate with their local newspaper to promote activities.

O'ahu:

Lead agency: Queen Liliuokalani Children's Center - Honolulu Unit, 1300 A Halona St. in Honolulu. Contact: Pua Kaninau-Santos at (808) 851-7731 or (808) 271-8582; kkaina@qlcc.org and/or pkshawaii@gmail.com. Additional agencies collaborating on SP Week activities: Hawai'i S.P.E.A.R.; Hawai'i Caring Communities Initiative, Koolauloa Health Center, Mental Health America of Hawai'i; Queen Liliuokalani Children's

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Center - Honolulu Unit; Survivors of Suicide (SOS) Family Grief Group; O'ahu and Statewide Prevent Suicide Hawai'i Task Force (PSHTF) members, agencies, and organizations; DOH Injury Prevention and Control Program, and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division.

Activities for SP Week on O'ahu:

- **Wednesday - Thursday, Sept. 5 – 6:** ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) two-day workshop at Queen Liliuokalani Children's Center, Honolulu Unit, 1300 A Halona St.
- **Thursday, Sept. 6 at 10 a.m.:** Lieutenant Governor's Proclamation for National Suicide Prevention Week -- join PSHTF members at the Lieutenant Governor's office on the 5th floor of the State Capitol for a proclamation ceremony for National Suicide Prevention Week. The public is welcome to attend.
- **Saturday, Sept. 8:** Suicide Prevention Awareness for the 9th Mission Support Command - Hilo troops, staff, and family.
- **Sunday, Sept. 9: Suicide Prevention Awareness for the 9th Mission Support Command – Maui troops, staff, and family.**
- **Monday, Sept. 10, 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.:** Lifekeeper Memory Quilt - Transforming Statistics Into Stories. Each quilt is comprised of fabric squares crafted by different survivors with photos, drawings, text, or embroidery in memory of loved ones who have taken their lives.
- **Wednesday, Sept. 12, 9 – 11 a.m.:** O'ahu Prevent Suicide Hawai'i Task Force meeting at Queen Liliuokalani Children's Center, Honolulu Unit, 1300 A Halona St.
- **Friday, Sept. 14, 6 - 9 p.m.:** safeTALK (Suicide Alertness for Everyone), a three-hour workshop at Queen Liliuokalani Children's Center, Honolulu Unit, 1300 A Halona St. (bento dinner provided 5 – 5:45 p.m.).

The 2012 Prevent Suicide Hawai'i: "Life Tools for Suicide Prevention and Healing After" conference, walk, and aloha reception will be held **Wednesday, November 14**, at the Elks Lodge in Waikiki. More information on this conference, a partnership between providers and survivors, will be available in the coming weeks.

For more information on National Suicide Prevention Week, please contact Nancy Kern at the Injury Prevention and Control Section of the Hawai'i State Department of Health at: (808) 733-9238 or nancy.kern@doh.hawaii.gov

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