



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR

LORETTA J. FUDDY, A.C.S.W., M.P.H.
DIRECTOR
Phone: (808) 586-4410
Fax: (808) 586-4444

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**NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION WEEK (SEPT. 8-14)
RAISES AWARENESS WITH STATEWIDE ACTIVITIES**

HONOLULU – To increase awareness about suicide prevention resources and support available to families, communities in Hawaii and across the nation are collaborating to host events during National Suicide Prevention Week from Sept. 8 to 14. The week marks the days leading up to and after World Suicide Prevention Day on Tuesday, Sept. 10. This year's national theme is "Challenging our Assumptions and Moving Forward Together."

"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 Hawaii."

Hawaii state data on suicides:

- Hawaii 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 Hawaii over the 2007-2011 time period, with an increasing trend in the annual rate of suicide among Hawaii residents.
- Fatality rates among Oahu residents were 38 percent lower, compared to neighbor island residents; rates across neighbor island counties were similar.
- The most common mechanism was by hanging or suffocation (49 percent), followed by firearm use (20 percent), poisonings (14 percent), and jumps from high places (10 percent).
- According to 2011 Youth Risk Behavior Survey data, Hawaii high school students had the 9th highest self-reported prevalence of considering suicide (16 percent), the 2nd highest for

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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 Hawaii 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-year-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.

2013 SUICIDE PREVENTION (SP) WEEK STATEWIDE EVENTS & CONTACT INFORMATION

Hawaii Island:

Lead agency for SP Week in Hilo: DOH Hawaii Family Guidance Center/Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division (CAMHD), Adult Mental Health Division (AMHD) 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); DOH Developmental Disabilities Division; County of Hawaii Office of Aging; Prosecutor's Office; Police Department; Care Hawaii, Inc.; Hospice Hilo; Kokua Mental Health; HOPE; and Veteran's Administration.

Activities for SP Week in Hilo:

Suicide Prevention week on Hawaii Island will focus on community awareness activities.

- Hawaii County Mayor Billy Kenoi signed a proclamation on Aug. 28 recognizing the importance of Suicide Prevention Week; SP Task Force, students, and representatives of UH Hilo attended.
- On Sept. 10, sign waving in multiple locations sponsored by a variety of groups.
- Throughout September, Hawaii Island Eastside Prevent Suicide Task Force will sponsor radio public service announcements and host "safeTALK" presentations.
- As part of the Hawaii Caring Communities Initiative (HCCI), students of Ola I Kahana will be sign waving.
- On Sept. 10, a visit by Kristina Bilfilco of HCCI will be hosted by the SP Task Force. Bilfilco will meet with Ola I Kahana students to discuss the importance of safe messaging, and will attend the SP Task Force meeting that same day.

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- On Sept. 14, Nancy Sallee, Prevent Suicide West Hawaii Task Force (PSWHTF) chair, is participating in the T4T Bullying/Suicide training in Hilo; those presentations can then be offered in the Kona area.
- In October, Nancy Sallee (PSWHTF chair) is tentatively scheduled to present the suicide prevention training ASIST in Hilo for DOE staff.

Lead agency for SP Week in Kona: Nancy Sallee, Prevent Suicide Hawaii 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:

- A poster designed by the Prevent Suicide West Hawaii Task Force (PSWHTF) will circulate on the west side of Hawaii Island. The poster shows suicide frequency, demographics, PSWHTF website and resources. The Kona website for suicide prevention can be found at: <http://preventsuicidekona.com/>. The website provides information on suicide data, signs and symptoms of suicide ideation, intervention help, specific information on veteran and youth suicide, and local/state/national resources.
- On Sept. 13 at 6 p.m., Kona Candlelight Vigil for Suicide Survivors at the Old Airport beach pavilion.
- The Task Force has scheduled four evening support groups in September, October and early November in Kona for survivors of suicide. Recruits will be accessed through the candlelight vigil and press releases. The one-hour support groups will be held on Thursday evenings at West Hawaii Community Health Center.
- PSWHTF members plan to schedule presentations in area schools on suicide prevention for students, teachers and staff in collaboration with Department of Education, including the suicide prevention training safeTALK.

Maui:

Lead agency for SP Week: Prevent Suicide Maui County Task Force. Contact Jeny Bissell, R.N., Co-Chair of Prevent Suicide Maui Task Force at [\(808\) 984-2136](tel:8089842136) or jeny.bissell@doh.hawaii.gov. Molokai Contact: Jessica Kaneakua, Molokai Community Health Center

Additional agencies collaborating on SP Week activities: Leslie Lau Hee and Dane Kaae, MEO Inc. Youth Service; Aris Banaag, UH Maui College Personal Support Counseling

Activities for SP Week in Maui County:

- Mayor's proclamation will be held on Sept. 9 at 5 p.m. followed by "Bullying and Suicide" film at the Ike Lea Science Building auditorium at UH Maui College
- March for Life will take place on Kaahumanu Avenue, Sept. 13 from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.
- Maui News advertisement will incorporate the phone number for the National Suicide Prevention lifeline.
- Maui County High Schools' assemblies will raise awareness about suicide prevention throughout the week at Maui, Baldwin, Kekaulike, and Lahainaluna High Schools.
- Public service announcements will be distributed via Maui County bus placards, social media, and local radio stations.

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- Molokai will host similar events during Suicide Prevention Week to educate and raise awareness in their community.

Kauai:

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

Activities for SP Week on Kauai:

- Members will promote the HOPES (Helping Our People End Suicide) and KLAS (Kauai Leaders Against Suicide) campaign by distributing posters, banners and bumper stickers around Kauai.
- The Kauai memory quilt and website: www.preventsuicidekauai.org are being promoted by the Kauai Task Force with their local newspaper and radio stations.

Oahu:

Lead agency for SP Week: DOH Injury Prevention and Control Program, Suicide Prevention Program. Contact: Nancy Kern at (808) 733-9238 or (808) 220-2722; email: nancy.kern@doh.hawaii.gov. Additional agencies collaborating on SP Week activities: Hawaii Caring Communities Initiative, Koolauloa Health Center, Mental Health America of Hawaii; Queen Liliuokalani Children's Center - Honolulu Unit; Survivors of Suicide (SOS) Family Grief Group; Oahu and Statewide Prevent Suicide Hawaii Task Force (PSHTF) members, agencies, and organizations; Department of Health AMHD and CAMHD.

Activities for SP Week on Oahu:

- **Sept. 5-6:** 2013 Pacific Regional Behavioral Health Summit at Tripler Army Medical Center. See more information at the conference website: <http://www.tamc.amedd.army.mil/prmc/prbhsummit/>
- **Sept. 9 at 11:30 a.m.:** Mayor's Proclamation for National Suicide Prevention Week. Join PSHTF members at the Mayor's office at Honolulu Hale for a proclamation ceremony for National Suicide Prevention Week. The public is welcome to attend.
- **Sept. 13 at 1 p.m.:** "Suicide Prevention Week in Hawaii" proclamation ceremony with Gov. Neil Abercrombie in the Executive Office, Ceremonial Room of the State Capitol.

The 2013 Prevent Suicide Hawaii Conference will take place on **Nov. 20 (8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.) at Koolau Ballrooms in Kaneohe**. For more information and to register for this conference, access the website at: <http://www.preventsuicidehiconf.org>

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

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For more information regarding this news release contact:

Nancy Kern
Injury Prevention and Control Section
Phone: (808) 733-9238
Cell: (808) 220-2722
Email: nancy.kern@doh.hawaii.gov