



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR

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DIRECTOR

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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 will 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 Wednesday, Sept. 10, 2014. This year's national theme is **Suicide Prevention: One World Connected**.

"Suicide does not discriminate by age, gender, ethnicity, or socio-economic status, but its effect on friends, family and loved ones is often the same – devastating and unfathomable," said Health Director Dr. Linda Rosen. "There is an urgent need for public awareness of the risks, warning signs, and resources available to those who are contemplating such an act, know someone who might be at risk for suicide, or for those left behind. Open and on-going discussion on suicide and suicide prevention is essential."

Hawaii state data on suicides:

- Hawaii ranks 34th nationally in its rate of suicide deaths (16th lowest rate in the nation).
- Suicide was the single leading cause of fatal injuries in Hawaii from 2004 to 2013, with a generally increasing trend in the annual rate of suicide among residents.
- Fatality rates among Oahu residents were 39 percent lower, compared to neighbor island residents; rates across neighbor island counties were similar.
- The most common mechanism was by hanging or suffocation (48 percent), followed by firearm use (20 percent), poisonings (15 percent), and jumps from high places (10 percent).
- According to 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey data, Hawaii high school students had the 7th highest self-reported prevalence of considering suicide (17 percent), the 7th highest for making a plan (15 percent), the 7th highest for attempting (11 percent), and the 15th highest prevalence for being treated for a self-inflicted injury (3 percent) in the country. Data was available from 42 states for these comparisons; the overall national prevalence was 17, 14, 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 U.S., with one suicide occurring on average every 14.2 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.
- Twenty million or more 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.

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention is sponsoring state-wide “Out of the Darkness” community walks to honor loved ones who died by suicide. The public is encouraged to participate at the following locations:

Oahu – Saturday, Sept. 13 (8 a.m. - 12 p.m.) at Ala Moana Beach Park

Contact Kerry Bosworth at (808) 772-2992 or oahu.outofthedarkness@gmail.com

Kona – Saturday, Sept. 20 (8 a.m. – 12 p.m.) at Honoka’a Community Park

Contact Melissa Anderlie at (808) 494-1829 or walktosave.lives@aol.com

Kauai – Saturday, Sept. 27 (7 a.m. - 10 a.m.) at Kukui Grove Center

Contact Gina Kaulukukui at (808) 241-1695 or Kaulukukui/lifesbridges@yahoo.com

Maui – Saturday, Oct. 11 (8 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.) at Queen Kaahumanu Center

Contact Leslie Hiraga at (808) 205-8087 or lahaina866@yahoo.com

Other activities include:

Oahu – Proclamation signing at Mayor Caldwell’s office at Honolulu Hale on Friday, Sept. 13 at 1:30 p.m.

Contact Nancy Deeley at (808) 773-9238 or nancy.deeley@doh.hawaii.gov

Kona - Candlelight Vigil for Suicide Survivors at the Old Airport beach pavilion at 6 p.m.

Contact Nancy Sallee at (808) 333-8988 or orchid_isle_psychotherapy@yahoo.com

Hilo - Candlelight Memorial for the Survivors of Suicide on Sept. 11 at Hospice of Hilo's Community Room at 5 p.m. Contact Cathy Hough at (808) 934-2919 or cathyhough@hospiceofhilo.org

Maui – Proclamation signing at Mayor Arakawa’s office at 200 S. High St. Kalana O Maui building in Wailuku on Sept. 9, 2014 at 3:30pm. Contact Jeny Bissell, R.N., at (808) 984-2136 or jeny.bissell@doh.hawaii.gov

A March for Life on Sept. 13, 2014 from 4:30-5:30 p.m. on Kaahumanu Ave. Contact Jeny Bissell, R.N. at (808) 984-2136 or jeny.bissell@doh.hawaii.gov

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

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