



# Ola Lōkahi

Creating a Healthy Hawai'i Together

November 2018

*The mission of the Department of Health is to protect and improve the health and environment for all people in Hawai'i. We believe that an optimal state of physical, mental, social and environmental well-being is a right and responsibility of all Hawai'i's people.*

## The #RideSoberHawaii Challenge

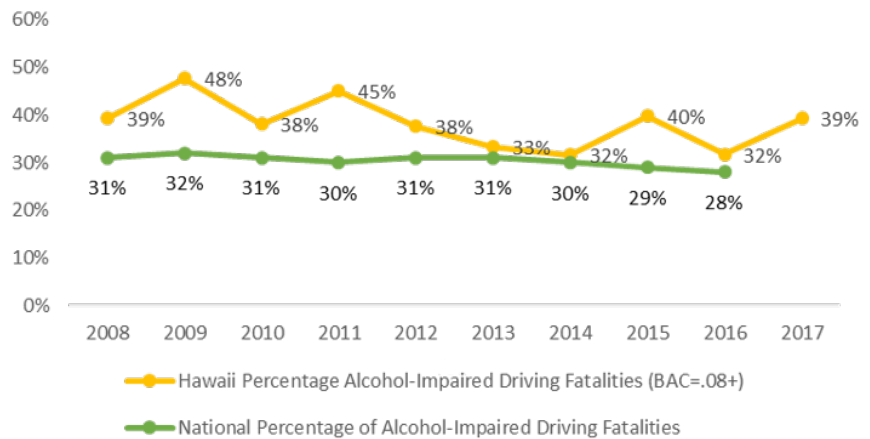
This holiday season, take the new **#RideSoberHawaii** challenge presented by the department's EMS & Injury Prevention System Branch. "Be part of the movement to prevent alcohol-impaired driving and its consequences by participating in the first ever social media challenge offered to DOH employees, their families, and friends," said **Kari Benes**, traffic safety coordinator. From now until Jan. 3, 2019, use the hashtag **#RideSoberHawaii** on a social media account to post a relevant picture, video, or status update that relates to riding sober or preventing alcohol-impaired driving and you could win a \$50 Uber gift card.

Start today by using the hashtag **#RideSoberHawaii** and post to either Instagram, Twitter or Facebook. A few ideas for social media posts include:

- A photo on Facebook of you and your friends in a taxi riding to a holiday party;
- A Tweet about volunteering to be a designated driver for your next sports event;
- Sign a pledge with your kids, teens or other family, that says they can call you anytime for a safe ride home and post about it;
- Use the "SaferRide" app to prevent yourself from driving drunk. [one.nhtsa.gov/link/saferride/](http://one.nhtsa.gov/link/saferride/) and post a comment on your experience.

Hawaii is Above the National Average in Percentage of Alcohol-Impaired Driving Fatalities.

Source, NHTSA and FARS 2008-2017



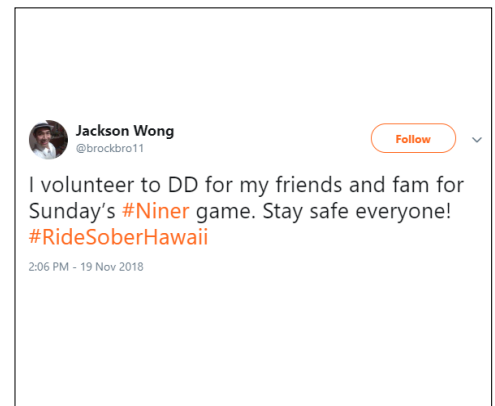
Current traffic fatalities, including alcohol-impaired are updated at [hidot.hawaii.gov/highways/safe-communities/](http://hidot.hawaii.gov/highways/safe-communities/)

Benes said, "The winner will be randomly chosen on Jan. 4 and contacted via social media. Every day that you 'post' and 'like' with **#RideSoberHawaii** will increase your chances to win a \$50 Uber gift card."

See the [full rules here](#).

The Injury Prevention System Branch provides statewide leadership in preventing death and disability associated with injuries in Hawai'i by educating, supporting and mobilizing individuals and organizations to incorporate comprehensive injury prevention strategies in their daily activities. Located at base of Leahi Hospital in the Trotter Building, the Injury Prevention System Branch staff collaborates with partners across the state to address the leading causes

of injury by focusing on: drowning prevention, fall prevention, poisoning prevention, suicide prevention, traffic safety, and violence and abuse prevention.



Example of an entry to the #RideSoberHawaii Challenge.

# What you can do about opioid abuse



*Often times, people who use opioids are vulnerable and do not intend to misuse their medication.*

Opioids are prescribed frequently for pain and are potentially addictive. In 2015, there were enough opioid prescriptions in the U.S. to medicate every adult for three weeks. "Last year in Hawai'i, about 690,000 prescriptions were dispensed to patients, or enough for nearly half of the population in Hawai'i," said **Eddie Mersereau**, alcohol and drug abuse division chief. Treatment programs in Hawai'i admitted 503 people from August 2017 to August 2018.

“**The drop boxes are anonymous, safe, and environmentally friendly.**”

## What are opioids?

An opioid is a group of pain relieving drugs that contain opium or its derivatives. Here's a list of opioids you may have heard of:

- Codeine
- Hydrocodone (Vicodin, Hycodan)
- Morphine (MS Contin, Kadian)
- Oxycodone (Oxycontin, Percocet)
- Fentanyl (Duragesic)

Even at low doses, opioids taken for more than three months increase the

risk of addiction by 15 times. Opioid misuse can be fatal, and in Hawai'i, drug overdose has been the leading cause of injury-related deaths. This is why it's important to use prescribed opioids as directed and to stop use when the risks outweigh the benefits.

Since opioids are prescribed to treat pain, the people who use them are vulnerable and do not start with the intention of misusing their medication. We should consider that our perceptions about substance abusers may be inaccurate and may not apply to those addicted to opioids.

## Opioid abuse is preventable

If you have been prescribed an opioid, talk with your doctor about how to use it appropriately. If you need to use opioids for an extended time, ask your doctor when and how you can safely taper off them. Here are the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's recommendations](#) for safe use of opioids:

- Use only when the benefits will likely outweigh the risks.
- Ask for an alternative, other medicines and therapy may work better.
- Three days or less is often enough for acute pain.
- Use the lowest effective dose and reassess your risks before any dose increase.

"When your medication is no longer necessary, the Medication Drop Box Program is the best way to get rid of unused medication. The drop boxes are anonymous, safe, and environmentally friendly," added Mersereau.

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## Drop Box Locations:

### Kaua'i:

- Lihu'e Station at 3990 Ka'ana Street, Lihu'e

### O'ahu:

- State Narcotics Enforcement Division at 3375 Koapaka Street, #D-100, Honolulu

### Maui:

- Hana Station at 4611 Hana Highway, Hana
- Kihei Station at 2201 Piilani Highway, Kihei
- Lahaina Station at 1850 Honoapiilani Highway, Lahaina
- Lanai Station at 855 Fraser Avenue, Lanai City
- Molokai Station at 110 Ainoa Street, Kaunakakai
- Wailuku Station at 55 Mahalani Street, Wailuku (Receiving Desk Lobby)

### Hawai'i Island:

- Hilo Station at 349 Kapiolani Street, Hilo
- Kona Station at 74-611 Hale Makai Place, Kailua-Kona
- Puna Station at 15-2615 Kea'au-Pahoa Highway, Pahoa

# Exploring health issues faced by Hawai'i's transgender youth

The Hawai'i Sexual and Gender Minority Health Report 2018 findings showed that transgender youth experience negative health outcomes in terms of mental health, violence, substance abuse and support at home. The report is the first of its kind from the state, and was made possible thanks to a workgroup convened by DOH and made up of community partners and stakeholders, and a new question on gender identity in a 2017 survey of high school students.

Findings of the report showed that transgender youth are likely to abuse tobacco, alcohol and drugs for example,

- Half have attempted suicide.
- More than 40 percent say they were bullied on school property or online in the last year.
- In the month before the survey, nearly 36 percent smoked cigarettes, 44 percent used marijuana and 53 percent used electronic vapor products.
- About half said that they sleep at their parent or guardian's home, compared to 94 percent of cisgender youth.

The report also documents the challenges, resiliency and hope for transgender people in Hawai'i. "Our report affirms what many on the ground level have been experiencing and reporting for years: that transgender youth are frequent targets of physical violence and sexual assault," said **Lance Ching**, Ph.D, MPH, chronic disease epidemiologist in the Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Division. "However, this story is not just one of gloom and doom. Our report highlights many stories of strength and resiliency. Reports such as these certainly have value from a surveillance perspective,



(L-R) Rebecca L. Stotzer, professor, University of Hawai'i; Lance Ching, epidemiologist, DOH, Thaddeus Pham, viral hepatitis prevention coordinator, DOH Cathy Kapua, transgender services manager, Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center.

but they also serve a much deeper purpose: to give visibility to a community. When you don't ask the questions and you don't collect the data, you are in effect, saying this community does not exist. This report is a reminder that there are allies and organizations right here in our state, standing ready to help."

Factors that can help protect youth:

- Family support and acceptance
- The presence of caring adults, within the home and at school.
- Positive peer influences
- Strong self-esteem
- Involvement in school activities

Each year, the second week of November is observed as Transgender Awareness Week to bring to light the transgender community and the issues they face daily. The week is followed by the Transgender Day of Remembrance, honoring those that died in acts of anti-transgender violence. The vigil was hosted by the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender & Queer+ LGBTQ+ Center at the University of Hawai'i's Kamakakūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies on Nov. 20.

View the full report at: [health.hawaii.gov/surveillance](http://health.hawaii.gov/surveillance).

**Cisgender:** identifies with their gender at birth

**Transgender or Gender Non-Conforming:** gender identity and gender at birth do not correspond

**Gender Identity:** personal sense of their gender

**Sexual Orientation:** describes who someone is attracted to.

Individuals may identify with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender, or choose not to label themselves at all.



If you have opioids, store them securely and dispose of them properly.

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Use the Medication Drop Boxes to safely dispose of leftover or unused medicines to:

- Prevent medications from being found or stolen for illegal use;
- Keep medications out of the hands of children and prevent accidental poisonings; and
- Protect the environment by not flushing or trashing medications

Always avoid crushing or breaking medication for disposal to prevent your risk of harmful exposure.

We all have a role in preventing opioid abuse. If you have opioids, store them in a secure place and dispose of them properly as soon as your treatment is done.

For more information go to: [www.hawaiiopioid.org](http://www.hawaiiopioid.org).