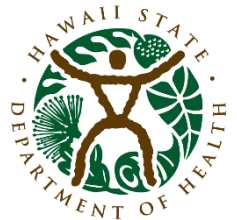




State of Hawai'i

Special Edition COVID-19 Cluster Report

May 06, 2022



The end of the school year approaches meaning **prom season** has begun for many schools. With case counts on the rise, the state has noticed an uptick of clusters associated with large school events. For gatherings, CDC recommends the following **COVID-19 mitigation measures**: stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations, do not attend if sick or exhibiting symptoms, avoid crowded places, test beforehand, and good ventilation, [CDC Gathering Recommendations](#).

In April 2022, The Hawai'i State Department of Health investigated a **multi-pathogen outbreak of COVID-19 and Influenza A** associated with a **high school prom** on Oahu. The school contacted HDOH for assistance and guidance when 37 students who attended the prom called out sick with **common respiratory symptoms**. Following investigation, COVID-19 and Influenza A cases were discovered among the students. The prom had over 300 people in attendance, which included students and chaperones. **Six attendees tested positive for SARS-CoV-2** (attack rate: 2%). No secondary cases among household contacts were identified. Of the 6 individuals who tested positive, 1 (17%) was unvaccinated, 4 (67%) had completed the primary series only, and 1 (17%) was up to date on all COVID-19 vaccinations. In addition, **4 individuals tested positive for Type A influenza**, with **one individual testing positive for both influenza A and COVID-19**. Of the 37 symptomatic individuals, 35 students reported receiving a COVID-19 test (home test or laboratory testing). However, with limited influenza testing and home test reporting, the true number of infections was likely higher than reported. Approximately 57% of the prom attendees had received a primary series of COVID-19 vaccine. Attendees reported mask use and social distancing were not practiced or enforced.

In April 2022, The Hawai'i Department of Health investigated a **cluster of 16 COVID-19 cases** associated with a **high school prom** on Oahu. The prom had over 600 people in attendance, which included students and chaperones. Ten attendees tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 and an additional 3 attendees were symptomatic and epidemiologically linked (attack rate: 2%). Three secondary cases among household contacts were identified. Of the 13 primary cases, 5 (38%) had received a primary series only, 5 (38%) were up to date on all COVID-19 vaccinations, and vaccination status was unable to be determined for 3. Mask use was required indoors except during food service.

To reduce potential COVID-19 exposure at the prom, both schools required all prom attendees to be **vaccinated** with the primary series or **submit a negative COVID-19** test taken within 48 hours of the event. However, both proms were held indoors which can contribute to higher risk of COVID-19 transmission among attendees.

Attending celebrations such as prom and other large gatherings can increase the risk of exposure to COVID-19 and other respiratory diseases, but layering certain mitigations strategies (i.e., vaccination, stay home if you are sick, correct and consistent mask use indoors and in crowded settings, social distancing, and increased ventilation) helps reduce risk and keep people safe. Masking upon return to school helps **prevent subsequent spread** following an exposure and helps avoid disruption to in-person learning. Celebrations and gatherings are safest when all participants are **up to date with vaccinations**. Influenza activity has been increasing throughout the state and coinfections with influenza and COVID-19 or other respiratory pathogens can occur. Getting your flu shot each year helps protect you against influenza viruses, and COVID-19 vaccines and booster doses help maximize your protection against the COVID-19 virus and reduce its transmission. If you are eligible, **get boosted** against COVID-19 to protect yourself and your loved ones. Even as COVID-19 restrictions relax within the state, it is important to **stay vigilant** and **take precautions** especially in high-risk situations.

COVID-19 Cluster Table

COVID-19 Clusters Associated with Schools in the Last 28 Days

| Oahu | | Maui | | Hawai'i | | Kauai | | Total | |
|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|
| Clusters (n) | Cases (n) | Clusters (n) | Cases (n) | Clusters (n) | Cases (n) | Clusters (n) | Cases (n) | Clusters (n) | Cases (n) |
| 15 | 158 | 3 | 28 | 6 | 85 | 3 | 12 | 27 | 283 |

Since April 1, 2022, the state of Hawaii has investigated 27 clusters associated with schools and school-sanctioned events. Of the reported and investigated clusters, 30% are related with high school proms, 7% other large school gathering events, 30% are within a classroom setting, 11% are related to athletics, 11% are related to early childcare settings, and 11% are associated with other school settings.

Identified factors associated with 8 classroom clusters investigated include mask optional settings (2 clusters), close proximity to another case (at least 2 clusters), and attending school while sick (at least 2 clusters). Classroom environments have a low risk of COVID-19 transmission when the school implements layers of mitigation measures—vaccination, staying home if you are sick, correct and consistent mask use indoors, social distancing, and increased ventilation. In the classroom setting, students are recommended to maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students, and with closer proximity, masks are an effective tool to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the classroom.

As COVID-19 continues to circulate in the state, country, and worldwide, we in Hawaii are evolving strategies to gradually normalize responses within institutions and the community. It is important for schools to continue notifying DOH about potential clusters to understand COVID-19 transmission in schools and the effect among the community. The collaborative relationships with the schools and DOH help keep keiki active in school activities and reduces disruption to in-person learning.

Definitions for Terms Used in this Report

Because this report focuses on clusters associated with non-household exposures, the definition of a **COVID-19 cluster** employed within this report is as follows:

Three (3) or more confirmed or probable cases of SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) linked to a particular site or event within one incubation period (14 days) *as long as those cases do not have outside exposure to each other* (i.e. they are not household members or close contacts outside the selected location).

**** This definition has been updated from two (2) or more confirmed or probable cases of SARS-CoV-2 to **three (3)** or more confirmed or probable cases of SARS-CoV-2 effective January 1, 2021. This change was made to reduce “noise” related to sporadic cases that may occur in the same setting, especially when community case rates are high, and is reflected in the county-specific tables beginning with the January 21, 2021 report. ****

Note: Identifying cases as part of a cluster does not necessarily imply that transmission has occurred in the site or at the event associated with the cluster.

Additional definitions for terms used within this report are outlined below.

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Case | Both confirmed and probable cases of SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19), including deaths. |
| Confirmed case | A case with confirmatory laboratory evidence. |
| Probable case | Refers to a case: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting clinical criteria AND epidemiologic linkage with no confirmatory laboratory testing performed for SARS-CoV-2 <li style="text-align: center;">OR • Meeting presumptive laboratory evidence <li style="text-align: center;">OR • Meeting vital records criteria with no confirmatory laboratory evidence for SARS-CoV-2. |

Educational Setting Definition

| Exposure Setting Category | Specific Settings Included in Category ^a |
|--|--|
| Educational Settings | Preschools, daycare, K-12, and institutes of higher education, school-based athletics, after school programs |
| ^a Specific settings included in the reference table may not be exhaustive for the category. | |