



Hawaii Epi Bulletin

HAWAII STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
DISEASE OUTBREAK CONTROL DIVISION

Fall 2018

The Hawaii Medication Drop Box Program – One way the Hawaii Opioid Initiative is Taking a Proactive Approach to the National Opioid Crisis



One of the major objectives of the Hawaii Opioid Initiative has been to address the diversion of narcotic pain medications from the patients to whom the medications are prescribed, to those who may abuse or misuse them. According to the 2016 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 6.2 million Americans misused controlled prescription drugs. The survey showed that the majority of the abused prescription drugs were obtained from family and friends, often from the home medicine cabinet.

The National Prescription Drug Take Back Day, sponsored by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), is held twice a year to encourage people to dispose of prescription opioids and any other medications safely and securely. Take Back Day events provide an

opportunity for Americans to prevent drug addiction and overdose deaths. In the 15th National Take Back Day on April 28th of this year, the state of Hawaii and Guam collected 5,076 lbs of medications from 18 locations.

To further address the national crisis at the local level, officials in Hawaii began looking for ways to build on the success of those nationwide events to find new ways to keep our communities safe. The Hawaii Opioid Initiative announced a new strategy to allow people to dispose of unused and expired medications anonymously, seven days a week, 365 days a year. The initiative focuses on the creation of "prescription drug drop boxes" located within the headquarters of participating police departments. The initial goal was to establish at least two sites by December 2019.

Drop boxes, like the DEA's events, help keep potentially harmful drugs out of the hands of our keiki and help our kupuna by getting rid of old medications regularly. Additionally, this program will prevent the downstream effects of flushing the drugs into the water waste system where they can enter the water supply or harm ocean life. By expanding on the DEA's Take Back Day events, Hawaii's Drop Box Program will actively address a critical public safety and public health issue.

County police departments voiced their support early on for the objective by helping to explore the options and working with the Department of Health, Department of Public Safety-Narcotics Enforcement Division, Drug Enforcement Administration, the Department of the Attorney General and the Lieutenant Governor's Office to implement the Drop Box Program. Under the leadership of Lieutenant Governor, Douglas Chin, the group had the program ready to roll out within just seven months. Thanks to the commitment and dedication of all the agencies and partners involved, the initiative not only reached the original goal of two boxes at county police stations but were able to expand it to all counties in the state.

Each 150-pound drop box is made of powder-coated steel, and measure 61 inches

tall, 21.5 inches wide, and 22 inches deep. Every steel drop box will be bolted into place and accessible to the public.

At the press release announcing the program's launch, Lieutenant Governor Doug Chin, stated, "This is a game-changer for a serious public health issue, we're being proactive and making it easier to remove dangerous drugs from our homes, schools and streets 365 days a year." In the first two months since the program was launched, county police report that community response has been positive with over 200 pounds of medications collected.

The next steps will be to continue to increase public awareness of this new option and to begin working with pharmacies and other healthcare groups to provide safe disposal methods for unused medications.

The Drop box sites are listed below, and more information can be found at hawaiiopioid.org

O'AHU

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

MAUI COUNTY

- Wailuku Station at 55 Mahalani Street (*placed within receiving desk lobby*)
- Lanai Station at 855 Fraser Avenue, Lanai City (*placed within front lobby*)
- Hana Station at 4611 Hana Highway, Hana (*location to be finalized*)
- Lahaina Station at 1850 Honoapiilani Highway, Lahaina (*placed within front lobby*)
- Molokai Station at 110 Ainoa Street, Kaunakakai (*location to be finalized*)
- Kihei Station at 2201 Piilani Highway, Kihei (*placed within front lobby*)

HAWAI'I

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

KAUA'I

- Lihu'e Station at 3990 Kaana Street, Lihu'e

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This timely report of surveillance and laboratory activities from the Disease Outbreak Control Division of the Hawaii State Department of Health contains information on investigations in progress and/or diagnoses that may not yet be confirmed. The **Hawaii Epi Bulletin** is intended primarily for the use of the public health professionals, should be considered privileged, and should **NOT** be distributed further.

Focusing on Future Public Health Professionals: Partnering with Local Universities to Enhance the Public Health Workforce

The Coordinator's Corner
Foodborne Diseases



Developing future leaders in public health is a goal shared by the State of Hawaii Department of Health-Disease Investigation Branch (HDOH-DIB) and local universities. To this end, Hawaii Pacific University's Master of Public Health program includes a public health field training course requirement as part of its curriculum.

This past year, HDOH-DIB earned an Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity (ELC) grant funded position to be filled by a student worker to build the epidemiology workforce. This position requires the student to investigate enteric illnesses, specifically salmonella, which occurs at rates higher in Hawaii than the national average. Among numerous qualified applicants Desiree Tupas, a Master of Public Health student at Hawaii Pacific University (HPU), was the top candidate and was offered the year-

long position in January 2018. As a collaboration between HDOH-DIB and HPU, this student worker position has allowed Ms. Tupas to complete requirements for her graduate degree, while gaining practical epidemiology skills through the investigation all Salmonella cases, clusters, and outbreaks on Oahu.

"Throughout my internship at the Hawai'i DOH, I feel like I have been able to put my skills and knowledge gained in the classroom into practice. Getting to see how diseases are controlled provides a new perspective on public services that many take for granted. The staff here have been incredibly insightful and welcoming, and I am looking forward to providing some great data to use in the future!"

-Adam Swanson, MPH student at HPU and Master-level intern at HDOH

students real-world experience and enhance the public health workforce of Hawaii.

Furthering this partnership with the local universities, HDOH -DIB also created a position for a Master of Public Health intern. Adam Swanson, another HPU student pursuing a Master's degree in Public Health, began working at HDOH in August 2018. Adam's main objective is to investigate Hawaii's rates of campylobacter using both retrospective and current data to provide a detailed description of the epidemiologic factors associated with cases. In this role, he has been contacting all persons with a confirmed or probable campylobacter diagnosis to conduct epidemiologic interviews.

Both students will complete their positions with the department in December. Their contributions to enteric surveillance, by investigating disease trends, obtaining detailed exposure information, and updating existing procedures and protocols, has been greatly beneficial to the department. The on-the-job training offered by HDOH will in turn provide these students with valuable experience to equip and inform their future careers working in public health. HDOH looks forward to continuing the tradition and maintaining close working relationships with local universities to simultaneously offer

"What I appreciate most about my time in working for the Disease Investigation Branch, was being able to gain valuable experience in public health practice... I learned extensively about the various processes of disease investigation and response. Being a Student Worker for the Hawaii State Department of Health has both enriched my academic experience in my MPH program and has further allowed me to develop skills and competencies for a prospective career in epidemiology."

-Desiree Tupas, MPH student at HPU and Student worker II at HDOH

1918 Spanish Flu Anniversary



Among the individual islands, Kauai reported the highest rate followed by Oahu, Maui and then Big Island.

This year marks the 100-year anniversary of the greatest influenza pandemic of modern times, the 1918 Spanish influenza. This pandemic was the most devastating health event in recorded world history killing an estimated 20 to 50 million people worldwide. It is estimated that 675,000 people in the U.S. died from influenza during the 1918 pandemic. At the time, the population of Hawaii was less than 200,000 people but deaths from the influenza pandemic are estimated at more than 2,300 from 1918-1920. However, this number may be underestimated because influenza did not become a reportable disease in Hawaii until late in 1918 and this number excludes military personnel. Data shows that the deaths due to pneumonia and influenza from the pandemic peaked at 574.4 per 100,000 population a full two years after the peak observed on the mainland in 1920. The reasons for this lag remains unclear. The death toll was particularly high for pure Hawaiians, less so for Filipinos and lowest for Caucasians.

A lot has changed since the first pandemic of the 20th century. Over the past hundred years, there have been improvements in medical care, development of antiviral medication, better diagnostics and improved global surveillance. During the 1918 pandemic there were very few vaccines available. After the flu virus was isolated in the 1930s scientists began work to develop an influenza vaccine. The vaccine was approved for use in 1945 and was first used to protect soldiers during the World War II. The vaccine was approved for widespread use in civilian populations the following year. Vaccination is the primary preventive measure against influenza virus infection. This anniversary serves as a reminder about the dangers of flu and the importance of vaccination. CDC recommends everyone 6 months and older get an annual flu vaccination.

To find where you can get your influenza vaccination, use the [Vaccine Locator](#).

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Mumps Outbreak Declared Over

The Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) has declared the end of the statewide mumps outbreak. The outbreak began in March 2017 with two clusters of cases involving nine individuals on O'ahu, and climbed steadily to 900 cases within a year. In total, 1,009 people with mumps were identified during the statewide outbreak. "We are able to declare the outbreak over because there have been no new cases confirmed in the last 50 days, which totals two maximum incubation periods for the illness," said Dr. Sarah Park, state epidemiologist. "To curb the number of people getting sick, we recommended an additional MMR vaccine dose especially for adolescents and adults. We appreciate the public and our healthcare providers heeding this recommendation and for their vigilance."

While the outbreak dose of MMR vaccine is no longer recommended, routine vaccination of all children should continue according to the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommended schedule because mumps continues to circulate in the United States and worldwide. In addition to routine vaccination, DOH recommends basic prevention strategies including staying home when sick, covering coughs and sneezes, and washing hands frequently.

Rubella in Japan

Health officials in Japan have reported an outbreak of rubella. Most cases continue to be reported in the Kanto region (Tokyo, Kanagawa, Chiba, and Saitama). Travelers to Japan should ensure they are vaccinated against rubella with the MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) vaccine before leaving the United States.

Rubella infection during early pregnancy may have serious consequences, including miscarriages, stillbirths, and severe birth defects in infants (Congenital Rubella Syndrome). Pregnant women who are not protected against rubella through either vaccination or previous rubella infection should not travel to Japan during this outbreak. Clinicians should keep rubella in mind when treating patients with fever and rash, especially if the patient has recently traveled internationally.

For further information, visit the CDC Traveler's Health website, [here](#)

Updates from the Pacific

Dengue

- The DEN-2 outbreak in **Kiribati** has been declared over.
- As of October 8, 2018, the DEN-2 outbreak in **Tonga** has been declared over.

Typhoid Fever

- Several typhoid fever outbreaks have been reported from several villages in **Fiji**. Between August 1, 2018 to September 30, 2018, a total of 11 confirmed cases and 8 suspect cases have been reported, with no deaths.

Invasive Meningococcal Disease

- Since January 1, 2018, there have been 80 cases (34 confirmed, 10 probable, and 36 suspect), including six deaths, reported in **Fiji** as of September 23, 2018. The majority of cases have been less than five years old. Mass vaccination is ongoing.

Polio

- One death due to polio has been reported from **Papua New Guinea**. There have been a total of 14 cases of polio reported from Papua New Guinea during 2018.

HDOH Hawaii Health Care Provider Disease Reporting Categories

Confidential

Infections/diseases which may carry a social stigma are to be reported with extra precautions to assure patient confidentiality. Reports are to be submitted within three working days of diagnosis.

Urgent

Diseases or conditions that are suspicious or presenting with novel symptoms that may or may not be part of a known disease or disease complex, labeled "urgent" shall be reported by telephone as soon as a provisional diagnosis is established.

The telephone report shall be followed by a written report submitted by mail or fax within three days to the Disease Outbreak Control Division, Disease Investigation Branch on Oahu or to the District Health Office on the neighbor islands.

Routine

Diseases labelled "routine" shall be reported by mail, by telephone, or fax to the Disease Outbreak Control Division, Disease Investigation Branch on Oahu or to the District Health Office on the neighbor islands.

Routine/Enteric (enteric prevention priority)

Diseases labeled "routine—enteric prevention priority" shall be reported by telephone as soon as a working diagnosis is established if the individual case is a food handler, direct care provider, or pre-school-aged child. Otherwise, routine reports may be submitted.

Outbreak Reports

Any disease shall be reported by telephone when observed to occur clearly in excess of normal expectancy as determined by the healthcare provider or the Director of Health. The telephone report shall be followed by a written report submitted by mail or fax within three days to the Disease Outbreak Control Division, on Oahu, or to the District Health Office on the neighbor islands.

HDOH Telephone Numbers

Oahu (Disease Investigation Branch)
(808) 586-4586

Maui District Health Office
(808) 984-8213

Kauai District Health Office
(808) 241-3563

Big Island DHO (Hilo)
(808) 933-0912

Big Island DHO (Kona)
(808) 322-4877

After hours (Oahu)
(808) 600-3625

After hours (Neighbor islands)
(808) 360-2575



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