



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

## News Release

**NEIL ABERCROMBIE**  
GOVERNOR

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### **IN HONOR OF NATIONAL HEPATITIS TESTING DAY – MAY 18 DOH OFFERS FREE HEPATITIS B AND C SCREENINGS**



HONOLULU – National Hepatitis Testing Day will be observed in Hawai'i on Friday, May 18, 2012. In collaboration with Hep Free Hawai'i, the Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH) clinics and other community-based sites are offering free hepatitis screenings to the public on Friday, May 18 to encourage people to find out their hepatitis B and C status. National Hepatitis Testing Day events will also help to raise awareness and support improvements in prevention, diagnosis, and treatment for people living with chronic viral hepatitis B and C.

(more)

“Often called the silent epidemic, most people with hepatitis B or C don’t have symptoms for many years,” stated Loretta Fuddy, A.C.S.W., M.P.H., DOH Director of Health. “People with hepatitis B and C shouldn’t wait until they feel sick to be tested because there are many things, including treatment, they can do to take care of themselves before they become ill. The earlier people know they have hepatitis, the better the outcome.”

According to DOH Immunization Branch estimates, 1 percent to 3 percent of people in Hawai’i have hepatitis B, and approximately 23,000 are living with hepatitis C. Hepatitis B and C are the most common known causes of liver cancer in Hawai’i, and Hawaii has the highest rate of liver cancer in the U.S.

“Many people with hepatitis B and C get liver damage or cirrhosis from the disease, which can be minimized by making healthy choices such as not drinking alcohol,” said Fuddy.

Hepatitis B and C are spread through contact with blood and body fluids. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that anyone who has been exposed to blood through needle use, blood transfusion, non-sterile equipment, or tattooing should be tested for both hepatitis B and C. Anyone born in a country with high rates of hepatitis B, especially countries in Asia and the Pacific, should be screened for hepatitis B. Hepatitis B is easily spread from mother to child through contact with blood and other body fluids.

Not all sites will offer hepatitis B testing. Individuals can call Aloha United Way 211 or go to [www.hepfreehawaii.org](http://www.hepfreehawaii.org) to find the free screening location nearest them (flyer attached).

For more information about National Hepatitis Testing Day, go to [www.cdcpin.org/HTD](http://www.cdcpin.org/HTD).  
For more information about hepatitis resources and events in Hawai’i, go to [www.hepfreehawaii.org](http://www.hepfreehawaii.org).

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