



August 2018

# Ola L<sup>o</sup>kahi

Creating a Healthy Hawaii Together

*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 of Hawai'i's people.*

## Amendments make medical cannabis more accessible

The Hawai'i Department of Health continues to work on the implementation of recent major amendments to the medical cannabis patient registration process and the regulation of dispensaries. These changes make access to medical cannabis easier for registered patients who use it to treat their serious health conditions.

Some of the changes had an immediate impact when amendments became effective on July 5. Local dispensaries experienced a high demand for the newly approved safe pulmonary administration (SPA) devices that were added to the list of approved merchandise that licensed dispensaries may sell to registered patients.

At a July 11 press conference, dispensary representatives displayed SPA devices that resemble vaping pens, but contain no nicotine and do not burn the product. For some patients, inhalation is the most effective way to administer medical cannabis.

The devices use pre-filled cartridges, which help provide exact



*Examples of Safe Pulmonary Administration devices from Noa Botanicals (top-right), Aloha Green Apothecary (left) and Cure Oahu (bottom-right).*

dosages. The one-time use cartridges can be returned to the dispensaries, which plan to recycle them.

Great lengths are taken to extract tetrahydrocannabinol or THC, which is reflected as a percentage in a product's detailed descriptions. Dispensary staff and product displays serve as educational resources for

devices, though certifying physicians remain a patient's best source of information on medical cannabis.

Testing and inspections are mandatory, and are the main factors that separate medical cannabis from marijuana that is homegrown

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# Safety remains the primary focus as new changes go into effect



(L-R) Peter Whiticar and Keith Ridley of DOH, Brian Goldstein of Noa Botanicals, Helen Cho of Aloha Green Apothecary, and Tori Staples of Cure Oahu at the July 11 press conference.

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or acquired on the black market. Private laboratories that conduct these tests look for contaminants and potency, and are essential for maintaining product safety and consistent standards for medical cannabis.

From the production facilities to the retail dispensaries, DOH conducts frequent inspections to ensure these facilities and their products adhere to stringent quality and cleanliness standards.

One of the common questions dispensaries receive is whether out-of-state patients may acquire medical cannabis while visiting Hawai'i. A new amendment will allow out-of-state patients with qualifying medical conditions to register in Hawai'i prior to their arrival here. A completely electronic online registration process is expected to be in place in spring 2019. Between local and out-of-state patients, it is estimated that dispensaries may eventually serve as many as 30,000 registered patients annually.

In the next several months, DOH will expand its staffing to comply with new amendments that create an office of medical cannabis and combine patient registration and dispensary regulation under one program.



Helen Cho of Aloha Green shows how SPA devices can be easier to use for those with joint pain.

## How sugar and calories from sugary drinks can really add up

The human body needs lots of water, especially in the summer with the extra sun and heat. While it can be tempting to hydrate with a soda, grab a boba or sip a tropical juice, these beverages contain a lot of excess sugar. In fact, sugary drinks are the number one source of excess sugar in the U.S. diet.

Consider this: Teens in Hawai'i drink more sugar than any other age group—more than eight sugary drinks each week. Since a typical 12-ounce can of soda has 150 calories, the average teen drinks about 1,200 calories weekly, or about 75 teaspoons of granulated sugar each week. Worst of all, these extra calories contain no nutritional value. According to DOH Nutritionist Carolyn Donohoe Mather, this means that, "the

average Hawai'i teen is DRINKING 36 pounds of sugar every single year! Studies in Hawai'i have shown that the average teen is at risk of gaining up to eight POUNDS of weight each year from sugary drinks alone."

Choosing water instead of sugary drinks is a great way to stay hydrated, without sacrificing your health or adding to your waistline. Teens and adults should drink 9-14 glasses of water each day. To dazzle your taste buds, try this: Fill a large pitcher half way with ice, add 1 cup of sliced fruit, cucumber, or ½ cup of mint or basil leaves. Fill with water and enjoy! Feel free to mix & match different fruits and herbs. For more information visit [RethinkYourDrinkHI.com](http://RethinkYourDrinkHI.com).

# Keep food safe by preparing for planned or unplanned power outages

**Peter Oshiro** of the DOH Sanitation Branch, recently shared emergency food safety tips on KHON2's Take2 morning news to prepare residents for planned power outages in Iwilei, Kaka'ako, and Ala Moana. Because one of the most popular things to do in the islands is eat, food safety is a huge public health concern.

Part of the response to planned power outages addresses what people need to do to keep food in their home refrigerator and freezer safe.

The first step in ensuring food safety during an outage is to not open the fridge or freezer door unless necessary. Keeping these doors closed has the potential to keep food safe for up to 48 hours in the freezer and up to four hours in the fridge. Foods should stay at or below zero degrees Fahrenheit in the freezer and at or below 40 degrees Fahrenheit in the fridge.

Being able to plan ahead for a power outage, offers a chance to cook and eat refrigerated foods on hand, then buy groceries in smaller quantities. Pack some foods into the freezer. Arrange cold foods to reduce the air between them and they will help keep each other cool. Here's a pro tip: place appliance thermometers in both the fridge and freezer to remove the guesswork about knowing if food is stored at a safe temperature. The top shelf of the door tends to be the warmest.

Unfortunately, power outages are often unexpected. If an emergency happens, find out how long the power is anticipated to be out. If less than four hours, food should be safe

**FOOD SAFETY BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER A POWER OUTAGE**  
Know how to keep food safe before during and after emergencies. Hurricanes, tornadoes, winter weather and other events may cause power outages. Follow these tips to help minimize food loss and reduce your risk of foodborne illness.

**BEFORE PLAN AHEAD (IF YOU CAN) ...**

- Put appliance thermometers in your refrigerator and freezer.
  - Keep freezer **0°F** or below
  - Refrigerator **40°F** or below
- Freeze containers of water and gel packs to help keep food cold if the power goes out.
- Group foods together in the freezer to help food stay colder longer.
- Freeze refrigerated items such as leftovers, milk, and fresh meat and poultry that you do not need immediately.
- If you think power will be out for an extended period of time, buy **dry or block ice** to keep the fridge or freezer cold.
- Store nonperishable foods on higher shelves to avoid flood water.

**DURING WHILE THE POWER IS OUT ...**

- Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed to maintain cold temperature.
- IF DOORS STAY CLOSED ...**
  - ... a full freezer will hold its temperature for **48 HOURS** (if half-full **24 HOURS**)
  - ... a fridge will keep food safe for **4 HOURS**

For the complete image, including AFTER an outage, go here: [www.flickr.com/photos/usdafoodsafety/28150350474/in/album-72157671912703496/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/usdafoodsafety/28150350474/in/album-72157671912703496/) - Source: USDA Food Safety

if the refrigerator door is kept closed. If the outage will be longer, food may need to be kept in a cooler with ice or dry ice. Use gloves when handling dry ice since it can burn the skin. Here are helpful tips for examining food after a flood or fire:

- Flood: [www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/ucm076881.htm](http://www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/ucm076881.htm)
- Fire: [www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/emergency-preparedness/fires-and-food-safety/ct\\_index](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/emergency-preparedness/fires-and-food-safety/ct_index)

Peter reminded viewers to never taste food to see if it's safe to eat. Harmful bacteria can be invisible and grow on food that tastes normal. No one wants to be sick with a foodborne illness during or after a power outage. If food may have been stored at unsafe temperatures, the rule is:

**IF IN DOUBT,  
THROW IT OUT.**

# It's HIP to be a state employee

HawaiiPay and the Hawai'i Information Portal or HIP, embrace a more efficient, less paper-dependent way of doing business. An email from Governor **David Ige** in July explained how easy it is to get setup in HawaiiPay.

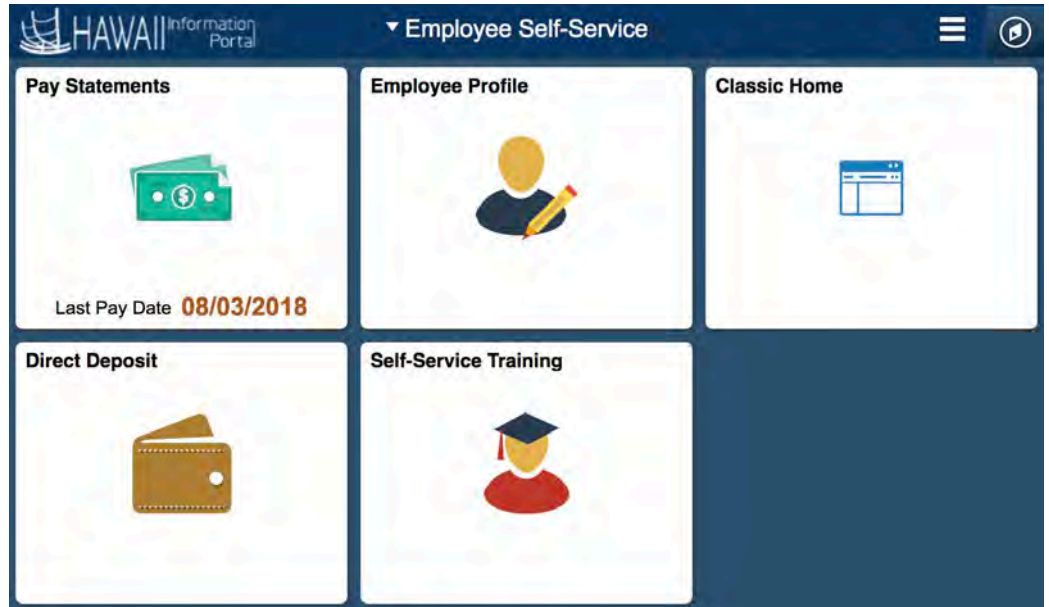
The system serves a total of more than 63,000 full- and part-time state employees. In July, 99 percent of Department of Health employees enrolled in the online direct deposit system. With schools starting up in the fall, the last set of employees to transition to the new payroll system will include the Department of Education and the University of Hawai'i.

One of the benefits of the move to an electronic payroll system is the reduced risk of errors. It uses the industry standard, Automated Clearing House, which reduces the risk of misdirecting deposits and manual errors.

The HIP is an employee's access point into the new system and future enhancements may be added to the portal. Employees enrolled in the system may review pay statements (starting with the Aug. 3 pay period), direct deposit accounts, and take training, all on demand. With the new portal, employees can expect to spend less time doing paperwork, have an easier time changing direct deposit options and find pay statements and tax documents online in one convenient location.

When 2019 rolls around, look forward to electronic W-2s and a Time & Attendance Phase. Any questions may be directed to:

The HIP service center on Oahu can be reached at 808-201-SERV (7378) or by email at [HIP@hawaii.gov](mailto:HIP@hawaii.gov).



Above: The HIP portal offers on demand training and direct deposit information, and is customizable.

## August is National Immunization Awareness Month

Raising awareness of the value of vaccinations is the focus of National Immunization Awareness Month.

Between 2001 and 2010, the United States saw big declines in the number of cases of vaccine-preventable diseases. Because of this, vaccines are one of the top public health achievements of the decade.

As seen with recent outbreaks of diseases like hepatitis A and mumps, and annual outbreaks of influenza, vaccinations aren't just for kids. Take the Adult Vaccine Quiz from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for a list of recommended vaccinations based on age, health conditions, job, travel, and

other factors.

Adult Vaccine Quiz:

- [www2.cdc.gov/nip/adultimmsched/](http://www2.cdc.gov/nip/adultimmsched/)

In addition to the list of vaccines recommended by CDC, an outbreak dose of MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine may be needed. Since March 2017, over 1,000 cases of mumps infection have been confirmed statewide. The best way to prevent mumps is to get vaccinated. Everyone should talk with their healthcare provider to find out if another MMR dose is necessary. For more information about the mumps outbreak, visit [www.health.hawaii.gov/docd/advisories/mumps/](http://www.health.hawaii.gov/docd/advisories/mumps/).

# DDD launches new website based on feedback from users

The Developmental Disabilities Division (DDD) website is a key resource for caregivers, patients and their families. "With many different people each with very different informational needs coming to one site, the ease of finding the right information is a top priority," said **Mary Brogan**, DDD chief. The DDD development team took a close look at feedback from their website users and tailored the site to meet those needs.

With beautiful, upbeat photos of program participants and new links such as "How to apply" and a button for "I want to be a certified caregiver," the improved navigation makes it easier to find vital information. The headers are simple and clear, such as "Who do we serve?" and "What is a Medicaid I/DD Waiver Provider?" lead users to the practical and useful information they want.

The website deftly presents a wealth of knowledge in chunks of content that are small enough to handle, yet substantial enough for detailed information. Required forms can be easily found on the site. No need to change any bookmarks to [www.health.hawaii.gov/ddd](http://www.health.hawaii.gov/ddd), since the URL has not changed. If users need help to jump to a specific area, there's a search box at the top right.

The DDD also created an eye-catching launch flier to spread the word about their new site and encourage everyone to see the improvements. New topic areas on the site include:

- Possibilities Now!
- Employment First
- Lifecourse Framework

The screenshot shows the DDD website home page with a grid of navigation tiles. The top row includes:
 

- HOW TO APPLY**: Learn how to apply for DDD services and the Medicaid I/DD Waiver
- PARTICIPANTS AND FAMILIES**: Learn about available services and supports
- MEDICAID I/DD WAIVER PROVIDERS**: Information for current and prospective waiver providers
- CERTIFIED CAREGIVERS**: Information for current and prospective Certified Caregivers

 The second row features:
 

- POSSIBILITIES NOW!**: Learn more about Possibilities Now!
- EMPLOYMENT FIRST**: Learn more about Employment First
- LIFECOURSE FRAMEWORK**: Supporting positive life trajectories, Preventing negative life events

The screenshot shows the 'HOSPITAL AND COMMUNITY DENTAL SERVICES' page. The breadcrumb trail is: Home » Participants and Families » Hospital and Community Dental Services. The page title is **HOSPITAL AND COMMUNITY DENTAL SERVICES**. Below the title are two links:
 

- [How to Apply for Hospital and Community Dental Services](#)
- [Dental Health Services Eligibility Application](#)

 The 'WHO WE SERVE:' section states: HCDS branch provides dental services for the vulnerable and underserved populations who have limited access to dental care. This includes:
 

- Adult (over 20 years old) Medicaid patients who are classified as aged (over 65 years old), blind, disabled or other special needs who do not have access to dental care;
- Individuals with severe chronic mental illness, the frail elderly, the medically fragile, and persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD); and
- Individuals who live in Hawaii State facilities, including the Hawaii State Hospital and Kalaupapa Settlement.

 The 'WE PROVIDE:' section lists:
 

- Preventive services
- Diagnostic services
- Restorative services
- Prosthodontics services
- Oral Surgery

TOP: DDD home page tiles. BOTTOM: Two clicks in for dental services.