



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month kicks off with annual Day at the Capitol, March 7

HONOLULU – More than 400 individuals with developmental disabilities, their family members, service providers and advocates from all islands will come together at the Hawai'i State Capitol to celebrate their abilities during the 19th annual Day at the Capitol on Thursday, March 7, 2019, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The event will highlight national Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month in March.

The all-day event will include a proclamation signing by Gov. David Ige at 9 a.m. in the Governor's Ceremonial Room. Gov. Ige will proclaim March as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month in Hawai'i, urging the public to recognize the abilities and contributions of people with developmental disabilities, engage with them and encourage them in their endeavors. Participants from across the state will attend the proclamation signing.

Participants will have the opportunity to discuss developmental disabilities-related issues and concerns with legislators from their home districts, be recognized during the House and Senate floor sessions by House Majority Floor Leader Dee Morikawa and Senator Rosalyn Baker respectively, attend public hearings and network with other stakeholders.

"The most effective way to promote positive change within our community is through awareness, education and integration of those with developmental disabilities," said Daintry Bartoldus, executive administrator for the health department's Hawai'i State Council on Developmental Disabilities. "We're proud to bring together so many partners to raise awareness and educate the community about the importance of treating everyone with respect and dignity."

Patricia Morrissey, director of the Center on Disability Studies at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa added, "Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month provides a platform to demonstrate the assets and benefits individuals with developmental disabilities bring to our community, and recognizes that they can be economically self-sufficient in determining their own lives."

An estimated 22,600 people in Hawai'i have a developmental disability that restricts their ability to function. Some disabilities may be obvious, for instance, requiring the use of a wheelchair.

On the other hand, some disabilities—such as cognitive impairments that affect the way a person speaks, learns or interacts—may not be as easily recognizable or identifiable.

The Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act defines a developmental disability as a severe, chronic disability, which is attributable to a mental or physical impairment that substantially restricts the individual's functioning in several major life activities and requires support services that are of lifelong or extended in duration. Examples include autism spectrum disorder, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, spina bifida and traumatic brain injury.

This event is a collaborative venture coordinated by the Hawai'i State Council on Developmental Disabilities in partnership with the University of Hawai'i-Center on Disability Studies, Hawaii Disability Rights Center, Disability & Communication Access Board, Hawai'i Self-Advocacy Advisory Council, Hawaii Waiver Providers Association, Hilopa'a Family to Family, Inc., Hawai'i Department of Health Developmental Disabilities Division, Assistive Technology Resources Center of Hawaii, Hawai'i Department of Education Community Engagement Branch and Community Children's Councils, and Special Parent Information Network: Hawaii.

The Hawai'i State Council on Developmental Disabilities works to support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to control their own destiny and determine the quality of life they desire. Through advocacy, capacity-building and systemic change activities, the Council is committed to promoting self-determination for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.

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