



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Event Designed to Reduce Injuries in Hawai'i

**Oahu Veterans Center
Sunday, Nov. 17, 11 am – 2 pm**

HONOLULU – Survivors and family members of those who have sustained a traumatic brain injury or a spinal cord injury will share their firsthand experiences at an educational event on Sunday, Nov. 17, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Oahu Veterans Center at 1298 Kukila Street in Honolulu.

The free event is sponsored by the Hawai'i Department of Health's Developmental Disabilities Division, Community Resources Branch – Neurotrauma Supports and the Emergency Medical Services and Injury Prevention Branch.

Depending on the type of injury, a survivor may experience changes in their cognition, emotions, language, physical mobility, and sensory perception that impact how they live, work and participate in everyday life.

The public is invited to learn how the injuries changed the lives of the speakers, presented both opportunities as well as challenges in their lives, and their role as advocates to prevent others from sustaining the same injuries. The goal of the event is to educate the community about preventive actions when engaging in physical activities such as wearing a helmet while skateboarding and identifying safe ocean conditions to reduce the risk of injury.

In addition to survivors and family members, Dr. Sheri Hiroi DuBay, a neuroscientist and research specialist, will present interactive activities about brain function. Participants will be able to touch a real brain and experience a change in their taste buds. With yoga instructor Diana Ho, participants will learn physical movement to maintain a healthy spine by strengthening their core and improving their balance.

The Brain Injury Association of Hawai'i, University of Hawaii's College of Education, Hawai'i Disability Rights Center, Pacific Disabilities Center, 'Ōlelo Community Media and the brain injury support group Hui Malama Po'o will also present activities and information resources.

Every year, about three million people sustain a traumatic brain injury in the United States, and 57,000 of those individuals die. There are about 400,000 individuals with a spinal cord injury in the United States, and an additional 18,000 spinal cord injuries occur each year.

An RSVP is required. Contact Michele Tong at michele.tong@doh.hawaii.gov or (808) 733-2155.

For additional information on resources for individuals with traumatic brain injury and spinal cord injury, contact the Hawai'i Department of Health's Neurotrauma Helpline at (808) 733-2155 or visit the Neurotrauma Supports website at <http://health.hawaii.gov/nt/>. The website includes a public service announcement [TBI SCI Awareness PSA 2019](#) recently produced in collaboration with 'Ōlelo to remind the public to act sensibly and take precautions to prevent injury that can have a lasting impact.

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