



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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## **Hawai'i Department of Health issues maximum \$120,000 penalty to Honolulu Tattoo Expo for violating public health laws by using 12 unlicensed tattoo artists at public event**

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) Food Safety Branch has issued a \$120,000 administrative penalty to Erin N. Carillo and Thomas H. Hernandez, the promoters of the Honolulu Tattoo Expo for aiding and abetting 12 unlicensed tattoo artists to practice the occupation of tattooing at a public event at the Hawaii Convention Center on Jan. 24 and 25, 2020 in violation of section 321-379, Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS).

The promoters of the Honolulu Tattoo Expo aided and abetted the violation of section 321-374, HRS, which requires any person that practices the art of tattooing to have a valid Hawai'i State tattoo license to protect the public from blood-borne diseases. All licensed tattoo artists in Hawai'i must show proof to the health department that they have attended and passed an OSHA-approved bloodborne pathogen transmission prevention class to receive a Hawai'i State tattoo artist license.

The tattoo licensing requirement ensures tattoo artists have received formal course work in required aseptic techniques and practices to prevent the transmission of blood-borne diseases to their customers or themselves when tattooing. Blood-borne diseases include HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, tetanus, and other infections which may become life threatening.

On January 24, 2020, health department agents observed eight individuals without a valid Hawai'i State tattoo license practicing the occupation of tattooing at the Honolulu Tattoo Expo. On January 25, 2020, agents observed four additional individuals without a valid license practicing the occupation of tattooing at the Expo.

"The complete disregard for public health rules placed the public at undue risk of contracting a bloodborne disease. They placed profits above public health. We hope this maximum fine sends a strong message to tattoo expo operators that only those persons with a valid Hawai'i State tattoo artist license may practice the occupation of tattooing in Hawai'i," said Peter Oshiro, Food Safety Branch program manager.

Hawai'i Revised Statutes Section §321-379 allows the Department of Health to impose fines of up to \$10,000 per violation. The health department has issued the maximum fine due to the expo operators' open disregard for Hawai'i laws designed to protect public health.

The Honolulu Tattoo Expo is not affiliated in any way with the Pacific Ink and Art Expo (PIAE).

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