



**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Department of Health highlights the importance of  
children's mental health services for  
Mental Health Awareness Month**

HONOLULU – May is National Children's Mental Health Awareness Month and in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) and the Children's Mental Health Awareness Planning Group are highlighting special events to build awareness of the need for comprehensive, coordinated mental health services for children, youth, young adults and their families. Activities this year follow the theme: "Bringing Children's Mental Health into Focus – Perfect Vision in 20/20."

"Now more than ever, we recognize the importance of ensuring access to mental health services for our keiki," said Dr. Scott Shimabukuro, acting administrator for Department of Health (DOH) Child & Adolescent Mental Health Division (CAMHD). "As a result of COVID-19, the youth and families of Hawai'i are having to adapt to unprecedented social distancing measures, and many struggle to cope with this new way of living. We want to remind families that our keiki's mental wellness is as important as physical wellness, and to use the community resources that are available."

Events to commemorate this year's National Children's Mental Health Awareness Month have been adapted to promote social distancing and other guidelines during COVID-19:

- A Facebook Watch Party on May 21 from 3 - 4 p.m. will showcase short films made by youth who participated online in the [Reel Camp for Girls](#) during the first week of stay-at-home orders. The mini-camp uses filmmaking to promote mental wellness. The Watch Party is hosted by Hawai'i Women in Filmmaking and will be accessible on the [@HIWomeninFilmmaking](#) Facebook page. A Q&A session with the filmmakers on Zoom

will follow the showing. Email [aloha@hawaiiwomeninfilmaking.org](mailto:aloha@hawaiiwomeninfilmaking.org) for the Zoom meeting invitation.

- The Hawai'i Arts Alliance and Mental Health America of Hawai'i are hosting a Healing Arts Series called "A Look Within Through Creativity." The series starts on May 6 and it will run every Wednesday in May at 12 p.m. For more information or to register, contact Sara Mizban at [sara@hawaiiartsalliance.org](mailto:sara@hawaiiartsalliance.org).
- Green is the color of mental health awareness, representing hope, strength, support, and encouragement for people who suffer from mental illness. In a show of support, the following buildings on O'ahu will display green lights in recognition of Children's Mental Health Awareness Month:
  - May 4-8: Aloha Tower; and
  - May 18-22: Honolulu Hale.

The National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health offers a variety of Awareness Month resources and activities to help families get involved throughout the month of May: <https://www.ffcmh.org/cmha-activities-for-youth>. Local resources regarding children's mental health and evidence-based services can be found at <https://www.keikimentalhealthmatters.org/> and <http://helpyourkeiki.com/>.

If you or your child is experiencing a crisis, call Hawai'i CARES (Coordinated Access Resource Entry System) for free, 24/7 support at 1 (800) 753-6879 or text ALOHA to 741741. For more information about the Department of Health's Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division's services, visit <https://health.hawaii.gov/camhd/> and <https://health.hawaii.gov/bhhsurg/>.

Led by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division, the Children's Mental Health Awareness Planning Group is dedicated to serving children and families and leading children's mental health awareness efforts in our islands. Participating organizations include: [The Bobby Benson Center](#), [Center for Cognitive Behavior Therapy-University of Hawaii at Manoa](#), [Child and Family Service](#), [Hawaii Department of Education](#), [EPIC 'Ohana](#), [Evidence-Based Services](#), [Hale 'Opio Kaua'i](#), [Hale Kipa](#), [Hawai'i Women in Filmmaking](#), [Hawaii Arts Alliance](#), [Hawaii Families as Allies](#), [Kaeru Services](#), [Kealahou Services](#), [Mental Health America of Hawai'i](#), [Parents and Children Together](#), [Sutter Health Kahi Mohala](#) and [Wai`anae Coast Community Mental Health Center](#).

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