



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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GOVERNOR

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Public invited to attend statewide virtual events to raise awareness of suicide prevention**

HONOLULU – In Hawai‘i, one person dies from suicide every two days. The Hawai‘i Department of Health (DOH) Emergency Medical Services and Injury Prevention System Branch, in partnership with the Prevent Suicide Hawai‘i Task Force, is announcing a series of online community events open to the public in recognition of Suicide Prevention Month in Hawai‘i —These virtual events will be held throughout September and October.

The goal is to raise public awareness about suicide prevention and the impact of suicide in Hawai‘i, as well as to connect survivors with “postvention” services — intervention activities after a suicide to support grieving family and friends who can potentially be at risk for suicide themselves. These services include safe media messaging, trainings for professionals, survivor outreach, and family member support.

In Hawai‘i, suicide is the leading cause of fatal injuries for ages 15 to 64 and is the ninth leading cause of all deaths in the state. From 2015 -2019, 959 Hawai‘i residents died from suicide.

“Suicide is a serious, complex and preventable public health issue,” said Director of Health Bruce Anderson. “It requires a strategic and comprehensive approach through outreach, collaboration with stakeholders, and building and maintaining statewide relationships to ensure resources are available to those who need them most. We hope that through these efforts, we’ll be able to identify effective strategies to reduce the risk of suicide.”

Each year, the Out of Darkness Walk (OODW) is one of the largest Suicide Prevention Month activities held in the state. Volunteers organize the event to increase awareness of suicide prevention resources and the available support for at-risk individuals, loved ones of suicide survivors, and the public. Last year, more than 900 participants, including representatives from all branches of the military and students from local schools took part in the OODW.

This year, the OODW fundraiser will become the Out of Darkness Experience and it will be held virtually on Saturday, October 24. The virtual experience will include a recap of suicide prevention activities from around the island and a live chat to give people hope, healing, and help. To register for the Out of Darkness Experience, visit <https://www.afsp.org/hawaii>.

To access crisis support, mental health resources, or substance use treatment services, call Hawaii CARES at 1 (800) 753-6879 or text 741741. Resources are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

For more information about Hawaii CARES, go to [manoa.hawaii.edu/cares](http://manoa.hawaii.edu/cares). To learn more about suicide prevention in Hawai'i, visit <http://health.hawaii.gov/injuryprevention/home/suicide-prevention/information/>.

## 2020 Suicide Prevention Month Virtual and Sign-Waving Activities:

### Kaua'i:

- Sept. 1 - 30: Rocks of Hope - Painted Rocks Virtual Activity with Messages of Aloha
- Suicide Prevention Awareness Month Proclamation with the Prevent Suicide Kaua'i Task Force and Community Partners (details to be announced)
- Sign Waving Across Kaua'i - multiple locations (details to be announced)
- Oct. 24: Out of the Darkness Experience. Contact: Patricia Wistinghausen  
[patricia@patriciawistinghausen.com](mailto:patricia@patriciawistinghausen.com) (808) 346-7492 | Visit [preventsuicidekauai.org](http://preventsuicidekauai.org) for more info!

### O'ahu:

- Sept. 1 – 30: Message of Aloha/Painted Rocks. Contact: Pua Kaninau-Santos  
[pkshawaii@gmail.com](mailto:pkshawaii@gmail.com)
- Sept. 10: Joint Services Suicide Prevention Proclamation Signing video. Contact: Stefany Garcia at [stefany.m.garcia.naf@navy.mil](mailto:stefany.m.garcia.naf@navy.mil)
- Oct. 24: Out of the Darkness Experience. Contact: Pua Kaninau-Santos, (808) 271-8582 or [pkshawaii@gmail.com](mailto:pkshawaii@gmail.com)
- Honolulu Mayor Kirk Caldwell proclamation
- Gov. David Ige proclamation

### Maui:

- Maui County Council proclamation. Contact: Danielle Bergan,  
[danielle.bergan@mentalhealthhawaii.org](mailto:danielle.bergan@mentalhealthhawaii.org)
- Oct. 24: Out of the Darkness Experience. Contact: Danielle Bergan,  
[danielle.bergan@mentalhealthhawaii.org](mailto:danielle.bergan@mentalhealthhawaii.org), and Kristin Mills, [kristin.mills@doh.hawaii.gov](mailto:kristin.mills@doh.hawaii.gov)

### Hawai'i Island:

- Sept. 10 (4:30 - 5:30 p.m.): Sign-Waving at various locations, Hilo. Contact: Yolisa Duley, [hipreventsuicide@gmail.com](mailto:hipreventsuicide@gmail.com)
- Oct. 24: Out of the Darkness Experience. Contact: JoAnne Balberde-Kamali'i,  
[tiahonu@gmail.com](mailto:tiahonu@gmail.com)

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