



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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Independent pharmacies administer COVID-19 vaccinations at nearly 90% of small care homes on O‘ahu, Hawai‘i Island

HONOLULU – Independent pharmacies on O‘ahu and Hawai‘i Island have administered first doses of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine to about 10,000 residents and caregivers in approximately 1,700 small care homes and have now begun returning to administer second doses. As of mid-February, 1,537 small care homes on O‘ahu and 152 small care homes on Hawai‘i Island, or about 90% of the total number of such facilities on those islands, received vaccination visits.

Five major categories of homes were visited: Adult Residential Care Homes (ARCHs), most of which house five or less residents; Community Care Foster Family Homes; Developmental Disabilities Domiciliary Homes, Intermediate Care Facilities and Adult Foster Homes for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The Hawai‘i Department of Health Office of Health Care Assurance and the Developmental Disabilities Division provided a list of small care homes to the pharmacies. The Hawai‘i Geographic Information Coordination Council assisted by using GPS technology to map out the locations of the nearly 1,800 O‘ahu facilities. The pharmacies, which are members of the Community Pharmacy Enhanced Services Network, then divided the island and fanned out to administer the doses.

The six participating pharmacy providers on O‘ahu included: Times Pharmacy, Pharmicare, 5 Minute Pharmacy, Foodland Pharmacy, QMC POB Pharmacy and ElixRx. On Hawai‘i Island, CPESN-affiliated KTA Superstores Pharmacy participated in the effort.

“We appreciate the partnership between these independent pharmacies in going into these neighborhood care homes and administering the vaccine,” said Edward Mersereau, deputy director of Behavioral Health at the Department of Health. “Their work will greatly contribute to keeping vulnerable members of our communities safe.”

“This was a big ask,” said Dr. Curtis Toma, State of Hawai‘i Med-QUEST Division medical director, who helped organize the effort. “The State has been counting on the support of independent pharmacies, and they have come through for us.”

“We used 15 staff people from our four pharmacies to go into 153 homes from Ka‘u to Kohala,” Kerri Okamura, director of pharmacy operations at KTA Super Stores said. “We want to take care of the communities that we’re in and we definitely want to be part of providing the vaccine to those who qualify.”

“We’re just happy to be part of the solution with DOH on the vaccination process,” Patrick Uyemoto, Times Pharmacy clinical services manager said.

On Kaua‘i, DOH nurses visited at least 60 of the care homes and administered doses to more than 100 residents. Caregivers from those homes went to the island’s DOH POD vaccination site.

DOH also organized strike teams and other partnerships to conduct focused visits to provide vaccines for residents of homes on Maui.

Toma and representatives from the independent pharmacy groups have been meeting weekly to discuss their progress and are discussing other ways the state’s independent pharmacies can assist as the vaccination process advances.

[Click here to download photos of KTA’s work to vaccinate long-term care facilities on Hawaii Island](#)

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