



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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Collaborative, multi-agency effort underway to reach vulnerable, hard-to-reach Hawai'i residents

HONOLULU – Several government agencies along with private-sector and non-profit partners have launched a full-scale outreach effort to ensure every individual who wants a COVID-19 vaccination is able to get one.

All Hawaii residents 16 years and older are eligible for vaccinations and the Department of Health is strongly encouraging everyone to take advantage of this.

“We’re working hard to understand people’s reservations and barriers to accessing the vaccine and to provide information and education about the vaccines and the disease in order to allow people to make informed decisions and access vaccine if they choose to,” said **Dr. Elizabeth Char**, director of the Hawai‘i Department of Health. “This requires personalized, door-to-door outreach and the collaboration in the community has been phenomenal. This will be key to reaching more individuals who want the vaccine but have not yet been able to be vaccinated. Nothing can replace this kind of relationship-oriented outreach.”

The collaborative effort has focused on vulnerable populations, especially for those in underserved communities who speak English as their second language and may not know how to navigate the healthcare system or vaccination registration process. To ensure easy access and convenience, teams are bringing the vaccinations into their communities.

The Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA), which oversees a portfolio of 85 properties with a total of 6,270 low-income public housing units across the State, provides the perfect venue for this outreach effort. Last year, from May to October 2020, teams from the Department of Health, doctors, nurses, Hawaii National Guard members and interpreters canvassed more than 2,400 units at 23 public housing properties on O‘ahu and Hawai‘i Island to provide educational flyers in English and other translated languages to educate the community about the COVID-19 virus, and tested those who exhibited COVID-19 symptoms.

“The pandemic is undoubtedly one of the most life-changing events that we have seen in modern times. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we started with door-to-door outreach, education and testing, and now we are continuing our collaborative effort to provide safe and convenient COVID-19 vaccination clinics onsite for our public housing communities, our surrounding neighbors and the general public,” said **Hakim Ouansafi**, Hawaii Public Housing Authority Executive Director. “We are truly thankful to collaborate with all of our community

partners to bring COVID-19 vaccination clinics directly to the most vulnerable populations that we serve.”

The HPHA has worked and continues to work with:

- Hawai'i Department of Health
- State Executive Office on Aging
- Elderly Affairs Division, Department of Community Services, City and County of Honolulu
- AARP Hawai'i
- Hawai'i Department of Health Public Health Nursing Branch
- Hawai'i Department of Health Medical Reserve Corps
- Hawai'i National Guard
- Department of Hawaiian Home Lands
- Hawai'i Public Health Institute
- Project Vision
- Hawai'i Pacific Health
- Kaiser Permanente
- The Queen's Health Systems
- 5 Minute Pharmacy
- Pharmacare Hawai'i
- Times Pharmacy
- Papa Ola Lokahi, the Native Hawaiian Health Care System
- Kamehameha Schools
- Waianae Coast Comprehensive Family Health Center
- We Are Oceania

“We recognize that many of our beneficiaries live along the Leeward Coast and providing local access to the COVID-19 vaccine is critically important,” said William J. Aila, Jr., chairman of Department of Hawaiian Home Lands. “We’re grateful for the collaboration with The Queen’s Health Systems, Waianae Coast Comprehensive; and Hawai'i Public Housing Authority.”

Over the past two months, the teams have reached out to elderly and disabled tenants to administer first and second doses of the vaccine and will now be reaching out to other family members living in the public housing properties.

Vaccination clinics were recently held for residents of Kalihi Valley Homes, Palolo Valley Homes and Mayor Wright Homes. The following are upcoming vaccination clinics:

- The Kuhio Park Neighborhood
Thursday, April 29, 2021
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
- Waianae Protestant Church
Sunday, May 2, 2021
1 p.m. – 5 p.m.
- Kamehameha Homes (AMP 33)
Tuesday, May 4, 2021
2 – 6 p.m.

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