



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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### **Leeward and Windward vaccination PODs wind down as state enters next stage of vaccination rollout**

HONOLULU – The vaccination clinics or Points of Dispensing (PODs) in Leeward and Windward Oahu that have been in operation for the past five months have been critical to the state’s rapid rollout of COVID-19 vaccinations. With the vaccine now available at more sites, however, these PODs will be winding down this week. This Thursday, May 13, will be the last day of operations for both PODs.

Residents are urged to make an appointment or walk-in at either POD before they close.

- Hours of operation at the POD at Leeward Community College will be 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. tomorrow, Tuesday, May 11, and Wednesday, May 12. On Thursday, May 13, the Leeward POD will only be open half a day, from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. Make appointments at <https://www.oneoahu.org/lcc-vaccine>.
- The POD at Windward Community Mental Health Center only has open slots available on May 11, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Register at <https://DOHBHA.as.me/JandJWindwardPOD>.

Altogether, almost 100,000 vaccinations were administered at both PODs since December, when the vaccines first became available in the islands. This averaged about 1,000 vaccinations per day.

“So many in the community really stepped up and gave unreservedly to rally behind a singular purpose,” said Dr. Elizabeth Char, director of the Hawai‘i Department of Health. “The PODs required extensive collaboration and excellent logistical and operational support, and as a result, our vaccination rollout got off to a very strong start.”

The Leeward POD was staffed by the City and County of Honolulu and Hawai‘i Department of Health employees with the support of the Honolulu Fire Department, Honolulu Police Department, Honolulu Emergency Medical Services Department, Hawai‘i National Guard, Medical Reserve Corp volunteers, University of Hawaii and Leeward Community College staff, and numerous other state, county and private partners. From Dec. 22 through May 13, this unique, multi-agency incident management team worked five days a week to plan and operate

the vaccination site for their O‘ahu community. Their effort resulted in the administration of more than 50,000 shots.

In addition to protecting people against COVID-19, this vaccination project also provided an opportunity for state and county partners to apply their large-scale incident management skills together. The county now has a larger, more diverse and more experienced team to respond to large events and emergencies in the future.

For the Windward POD, a team of 30 Behavioral Health Administration employees, who volunteered their time and effort, took on this responsibility in addition to their work. The employees were mostly from the Adult Mental Health Division, with additional support from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division, Developmental Disabilities Division, and Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division. The employees all worked as a seamless team to set up the PODs and worked 11- hour days at least three days a week. They received additional support from Project Vision Hawai‘i, HARRIETT (Hotel and Restaurant Industry Employment and Training Trust), UniteHere Local 5, Banquet Solutions Hawaii, the Medical Reserve Corps and other community volunteers. Data entry staff and those who responded to emails had even longer days.

“This has been a rewarding journey,” said Edward Mersereau, deputy director of Behavioral Health Administration for the health department, who was also responsible for vaccine allocation and distribution. “The behavioral health team and others from the community were on a mission and worked tirelessly to vaccinate as many people as possible. For most of the time period the POD was active, about 1,100 to 1,200 vaccine doses were being administered every day for three to four days a week. But what I’m also really proud of is that the team worked hard to make sure everyone who came to a POD had a positive experience, from the time they checked in until the time they left.”

The Department of Health’s Behavioral Health Administration will continue to coordinate vaccinations for pop-up and mobile clinics to reach those with behavioral health challenges, the homebound, homeless, and other communities to provide additional access to vaccine.

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