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DOH, community mark World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) and community members are raising awareness of victims of traffic fatalities to mark World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims on November 20.

In Hawai'i, there were 527 traffic-related deaths from 2017-2021. From January through June 2022, there were 60 fatalities statewide, compared to 46 during the same period in 2021.

Buildings across the state will be lit orange from November 20 through Thanksgiving week in remembrance of victims and their loved ones, and to honor first responders. Participating buildings include O'ahu's Aloha Tower and IBM buildings, and Kaua'i's Mo'ikeha building. Partners include the Hawai'i Department of Transportation, Kaua'i and Honolulu Police Departments, and the Howard Hughes Corporation.

"World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims serves as an important reminder that we can all take steps to improve road safety," said Emergency Medical Services and Injury Prevention System Branch Chief Dr. Alvin Bronstein.

In 2021, deaths from traffic crashes in the U.S. increased 9% from 2020 and from 18% from 2019 according to National Safety Council estimates.

"MADD believed the lockdowns and decreased miles travelled would result in fewer traffic fatalities in 2020 and 2021. We were wrong. With more people driving in 2022 the alarming estimates for the first quarter indicate another deadly increase," said Theresa Paulette from Mothers Against Drunk Driving Hawaii. "We can surmise that there will be an increase in alcohol-related fatalities. This is a community issue. We can and must do better. Drunk driving is a 100% preventable crime. It is truly simple: if you value life, your own, and others - don't drink and drive."

DOH's Emergency Medical Services and Injury Prevention System Branch reminds all drivers to slow down, buckle up, yield for emergency vehicles, and not drink and drive. Law enforcement statewide is always on the lookout for impaired driving, especially during Thanksgiving weekend and other holidays. Maui Police Department will operate their 4th annual Hannah Brown Memorial Impaired Driving Awareness Checkpoint on Nov. 23rd. Hannah was a Maui teen who was killed by a drunk driver traveling on the wrong side of the road.

For more information about national World Day of Remembrance events, visit worlddayofremembrance.org.

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