



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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Department of Health to participate in “Healthy Kids Day” events at local YMCAs in recognition of “Brain Injury Awareness Month”

HONOLULU, HI – In recognition of “Brain Injury Awareness Month,” the Department of Health (DOH) Neurotrauma Program and its partners are participating in “Healthy Kids Day” events being hosted at local YMCA locations on O’ahu on Saturday, April 1, 2023, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Interested parties may register to attend this free community event at:

<https://www.ymcahonolulu.org/about/news/healthy-kidsday> .

The Hawaii Bicycling League will be participating in the bike rodeo for elementary and middle school-aged children at Leeward YMCA and will have bicycles on hand to teach keiki biking skills and street safety. Free multi-sport helmets will be given out on a first-come first-served basis. At both the Nu’uanu and Kalihi YMCA locations, safety tips and injury prevention news from collaborating agencies will be made available through information resource tables.

Other partners contributing to this event are: Brain Injury Association of Hawaii, Leeward Pilots Club, The Queen’s Medical Center Trauma Unit, and Kapi’olani Medical Center for Women and Children.

Across the United States, traumatic brain injuries (TBIs) accounted for approximately 223,135 hospitalizations in 2019 and 64,362 TBI-related deaths in 2020. In Hawai’i between 2018 and 2021, the annual average statistics related to TBIs were 4,741 injuries, 1,294 hospitalizations, 3,447 emergency department visits and 108 deaths.

According to DOH Developmental Disabilities Division Administrator Mary Brogan, “TBIs are of immense concern because these injuries are preventable. A TBI can affect how a brain processes information, compromising a person’s cognition, emotions, language, mobility, and sensory perception, all of which impact a TBI survivor’s physical functioning and social

interactions. Injury prevention practiced regularly can minimize the chances of a TBI and a life-altering event.”

The DOH Neurotrauma Program cultivates and shares resources to address the needs of individuals and their families affected by neurotrauma injury. The program encourages people to learn about brain injuries and how to prevent them. The following prevention techniques are recommended to avoid TBI:

- Wear a helmet or appropriate headgear when you or your children ride a bike, motorcycle, moped, scooter, or skateboard, play contact sports or baseball/softball, or ride a horse;
- Wear a seatbelt every time you drive or ride in a motor vehicle and properly install and use infant and child car seats;
- Never drive while under the influence of alcohol or drugs;
- Eliminate trip hazards at home for kūpuna through regular medication reviews and annual eye exams. Regular exercise is highly recommended to help older adults maintain and improve their balance and coordination; and
- Make living and play areas safer for children by installing window guards, using safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs, and make sure your child’s playground has soft material under it.

For additional information on resources for individuals with TBI, please call the Neurotrauma Helpline at (808) 733-2155 or visit the Neurotrauma Program website at <http://health.hawaii.gov/nt/>.

For TBI statistics, please visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/traumaticbraininjury/data/index.html>

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