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DOH CELEBRATES MENTAL HEALTH MONTH IN MAY

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HONOLULU — The Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH) and its partners are joining together in the month of May for Mental Health Month to encourage Hawai'i residents to foster acceptance of mental health care and end the prejudice and discrimination that create barriers to seeking treatment.

DOH Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division (CAMHD), Adult Mental Health Division (AMHD), the Children's Mental Health Acceptance (CMHA) Planning Hui and community partners are participating in this effort to positively impact social change by focusing on equity and inclusion for people with mental health concerns.

[Mental Health Month](#) encourages people to start the difficult conversation about caring for our mental well-being, which is a significant public health issue for all ages:

- One in six [youth](#) has a mental, emotional, developmental, or behavioral disorder;
- One in five [adults](#) lives with a mental health concern; and
- One in four [older adults](#) ages 65 years or older will experience a mental health concern.

To bring awareness to the importance of mental health, please join us to celebrate “May Is Mental Health Month: Day at the Capitol” on May 1 from 9:00 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. Take a mental health break and get some sunshine and fresh air at this public event at the Hawai‘i State Capitol. Twenty-seven youth and adult service providers and community organizations will be educating and sharing about their advocacy initiatives.

Green is the national color of mental health acceptance, representing hope, strength, support and encouragement for people who live with mental health concerns. The following buildings will display green lights in support of mental health:

O‘ahu:

- **May 1-31:** Hawai‘i Self Storage (Kaimuki and Kapolei), Hawai‘i State Capitol, Hawaiki Tower, HMSA, Nalu Lani Plaza (Kaka‘ako) and Pali Momi Medical Center
- **May 1-4, 13-18, and 26-31:** Aloha Tower
- **May 1-8:** IBM Building (Kaka‘ako)
- **May 6-10:** American Savings Bank (N. Beretania Street) and Board of Water Supply
- **May 13-17:** Honolulu Hale and Blaisdell Center Arena
- **May 27-31:** Windward Mall

Kaua‘i:

- **May 1-31:** Līhu‘e Civic Center and Wilcox Medical Center

ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH IN HAWAII

The [2021 Hawai‘i Youth Risk Behavior Survey](#) data for children and youth revealed some key findings:

- More than half of public-school students (54% of middle school and 56% of high school students) never or rarely got the help they needed (among students who reported having felt sad, empty, hopeless, angry or anxious).
- Of public middle school students, 34% have felt sad or hopeless almost every day for two or more weeks in a row, so that they stopped doing some usual activities and 27% have seriously thought about killing themselves.
- Of public high school students, in the past 12 months, 35% felt sad or hopeless almost every day for two or more weeks in a row so that they stopped doing some usual activities and 17% have seriously considered attempting suicide.

“It’s time for us to move from awareness of children’s mental health concerns to acceptance,” said Keli Acquaro, acting administrator for CAMHD. “This means that we need to accept that mental health concerns are a part of the human condition and focus on how we can build more supportive and nurturing communities for our keiki. We can all do our part by showing the young people in our lives that we care.”

In Hawai‘i, about 21.5% of adults had a mental illness in the past year, according to 2021 and 2022 NSDUH state-level estimates.

Additionally, the 2022 Hawai‘i Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) showed that in the state:

- More than 1 in 3 adults (35.8%) reported at least one day in the past 30 days when their mental health was not good.
- 1 in 8 adults (12.5%) have been told by a health professional that they had a depressive disorder.

“In light of recent disasters and tragedies, it is even more critical that residents have access to responsive, comprehensive, and culturally sensitive mental health support,” said Dr. Courtenay Matsu, acting administrator for AMHD.

If you or someone you know is experiencing an emotional crisis, thoughts of suicide, in need of extra emotional support or resources to help with substance use, call, text, or chat Hawai‘i CARES 988 free 24/7 call center to connect with a locally trained counselor who can help with linkage to behavioral health crisis services. Call Aloha United Way 211, or text, chat or email for over 4,000 local resources.

For more information about children’s mental health services, visit <https://health.hawaii.gov/camhd/>. For more information about adult mental health services, visit <https://health.hawaii.gov/amhd/>.

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