



STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU 'ĀINA O HAWAI'I

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**HAWAII MARKS WORLD HEPATITIS DAY WITH MAJOR INVESTMENT
IN VIRAL HEPATITIS ELIMINATION STRATEGY**

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HONOLULU — Yesterday at the Hawai'i Hepatitis Day 2025 Annual Meeting the Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) announced a renewed commitment to statewide hepatitis elimination. This is in the lead-up to World Hepatitis Day on July 28, which is a global effort to raise awareness of viral hepatitis, an inflammation of the liver that can cause severe liver disease, liver cancer and even death.

Hawai'i has one of the highest rates of liver cancer in the country, largely driven by hepatitis B and C infections. Death rates associated with hepatitis B are higher in Hawai'i compared to elsewhere in the United States, while hepatitis C has been associated with premature deaths in Hawai'i. Viral hepatitis disproportionately affects Asian and Pacific Islander people, sexual and gender minorities, people who inject drugs, unhoused individuals and people who are or have been incarcerated.

Act 114, signed into law by Governor Josh Green, M.D., on May 29, 2025, will expand viral hepatitis services in Hawai'i. Act 114 provides additional funding for the DOH to

strengthen statewide efforts to increase awareness and access to hepatitis services, including testing, immunizations, care coordination and treatment.

“These new resources come at a critical point in the fight against viral hepatitis and put us on the path to eliminate viral hepatitis in Hawai‘i by 2030,” said Timothy McCormick, chief of the DOH Harm Reduction Services Branch. “It is a shining example of what we can achieve when state agencies and community partners come together around a shared goal.”

In 2011, the Hawai‘i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHHRC) and the DOH Harm Reduction Services Branch formed [Hep Free Hawai‘i](#), a coalition of more than 100 partners dedicated to increasing awareness of and access to viral hepatitis and harm reduction services in Hawai‘i. Hep Free Hawai‘i, a public-private partnership that includes healthcare providers, social service organizations, advocates and public agencies, created a statewide plan to eliminate viral hepatitis by 2030. Act 114 recognizes the progress made by Hep Free Hawai‘i and provides new state funding to advance hepatitis elimination efforts.

“Hawai‘i now has greater resources and infrastructure to implement what we know works: evidence-based interventions grounded in equity, compassion and care,” said Heather Lusk, HHHRC executive director. “We are incredibly heartened and proud that our state is committed to implementing effective public health policy.”

HHHRC serves Hawai‘i communities by reducing the harm and fighting the stigma of HIV, hepatitis, homelessness, substance use, mental illness and poverty in our community. It focuses its efforts on those disproportionately affected by social determinants of health, including but not limited to: people living with and/or affected by HIV, hepatitis and substance use, and the transgender, LGBTQ, and Native Hawaiian communities. It fosters health, wellness and systemic change in Hawai‘i and the Pacific through care services, advocacy, training, prevention, education and capacity building. To learn more, visit www.hhhrc.org.

The Harm Reduction Services Branch of the DOH has a mission to empower people in Hawai‘i to make responsible health decisions for themselves and others. It does so by providing statewide leadership and coordination for the prevention, treatment, care and surveillance of infections transmitted primarily through sexual contact or injection drug use and assuring the accessibility and delivery of client-centered, non-judgmental and comprehensive services with the spirit of aloha and respect. Learn more at www.health.hawaii.gov/harmreduction/.

Hep Free Hawai‘i is a coalition of local, national and global partners dedicated to increasing awareness of and access to viral hepatitis and harm reduction services throughout the state of Hawai‘i. Born out of a partnership between the DOH, the CHOW

Project (now the HHHRC) and other community agencies, Hep Free Hawai'i has been successful by connecting with communities across the islands to make Hawai'i truly "Hep Free." Learn more at www.hepfreehawaii.org.

More information about the Hawai'i hepatitis elimination strategy is available at www.hepfreehawaii.org/hep-free-2030.

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