

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII



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KA LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
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In reply, please refer to:
File:

December 31, 2025

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi,
President and Members of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 409
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

The Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura,
Speaker
and Members of the House of
Representatives
Thirty-Third State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 431
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear President Kouchi, Speaker Nakamura, and Members of the Legislature:

For your information and consideration, I am transmitting a copy of the Annual Report of the Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities to the Legislature, pursuant to Chapter 333E, Section 3, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

In accordance with Section 93-16, Hawaii Revised Statutes, I am also informing you that the report may be viewed electronically at:

<https://health.hawaii.gov/opppd/departments-of-health-reports-to-2026-legislature/>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ken Fink", is written over a faint circular stamp.

Kenneth S. Fink, M.D., M.P.H., M.G.A.
Director of Health

Enclosures

c: Legislative Reference Bureau
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REPORT TO THE THIRTY- THIRD LEGISLATURE

2026 SESSION

PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 333E-3(5)
PREPARE AND SUBMIT REPORTS
TO THE GOVERNOR, THE
LEGISLATURE, AND ALL
CONCERNED DEPARTMENT
HEADS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE STATE PLAN

**STATE OF HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH**

DECEMBER 2025

**HAWAI'I STATE COUNCIL ON
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

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HAWAII STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Council is to empower, advocate, and support Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities statewide to control their own destiny and determine the quality of life they desire.

VISION STATEMENT

Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities are equal to all persons and enjoy basic human rights, among them life, freedom, and the pursuit of happiness. They have choices about where they live, work, learn, play, pursue their spiritual beliefs, are respected and receive the supports they need.

IMPLEMENTATION STATEMENT

To this end, the Council will:

- Work for self-determination
- Advocate for systems change
- Provide information, education, and planning
- Serve as a Conscience/monitor of the State
- Promote best practices



ABOUT THE COUNCIL

State Councils were established in response to the federal ***Developmental Disabilities Services and Facilities Construction Act of 1970*** (PL 91-517). Hawai'i's Council was established in State Law by Act 198, Session Laws of Hawai'i, in 1975.

The Council is administratively attached to the Department of Health (DoH). The department serves as the designated state agency, providing fiduciary and administrative support.



WHAT WE DO

The Council engages in activities which **change the system** of services for people with developmental disabilities and conducts systems change, **capacity building**, and advocacy activities that...

- Provide training for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families including legislative advocacy, training on the legislative process, and leadership development.
- Demonstrate new approaches to services, supports, and assistance.
- Inform federal, State, and local policymakers.
- Foster interagency collaboration and coordination.
- Eliminate barriers and enhancing the design and redesign of systems.
- Develop and support coalitions.
- Educate the public.
- Coordinate and support community activities that follow the Council's mission.

WHO WE ARE

The Council, appointed by the Governor, is a group of individuals dedicated to improving the lives of Hawai'i's citizens with developmental disabilities. The philosophy of membership is that all key stakeholders are represented at the Council table: Individuals with developmental disabilities; their family members, advocates; representatives of State and private agencies who provide services; representatives of the Hawai'i Disability Rights Center (HDRC), the state's Protection and Advocacy agency; University of Hawai'i's Center on Disability Studies (CDS) and other key community interests. The beauty of this composition is in the skills and experience that each brings to the table and shares with other Council members.



DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY DEFINITIONS

[From PL 106-402, Sec. 102. Definitions, (8)]

(A) IN GENERAL. – The term "developmental disability" means a severe, chronic disability of an individual that ---

- (i) is attributable to a mental or physical impairment or combination of mental and physical impairments
- (ii) is manifested before the individual attains age 22
- (iii) is likely to continue indefinitely
- (iv) results in substantial functional limitations in 3 or more of the following areas of major life activity
 - (I) Self-care.
 - (II) Receptive and expressive language.
 - (III) Learning.
 - (IV) Mobility.
 - (V) Self-direction.
 - (VI) Capacity for independent living.
 - (VII) Economic self-sufficiency; and
 - (VIII) Reflects the individual's need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic services, individualized supports, or other forms of assistance that are of lifelong or extended duration and are individually planned and coordinated.

(B) INFANTS AND YOUNG CHILDREN --- An individual from birth to age 9, inclusive, who has a substantial developmental delay or specific congenital or acquired condition, may be considered to have a developmental disability without meeting 3 or more of the criteria described in clauses (i) through (v) subparagraph (A) if the individual, without services and supports, has a high probability of meeting those criteria later in life.

The Council supported the Self-Advocacy Network in becoming a non-profit organization.

The State Legislature, through Act 213, Session Laws of Hawaii 2007, appropriated funds to establish and support a statewide self-advocacy network for persons with developmental disabilities (DD). The Hawaii Self-Advocacy Advisory Council (SAAC) is a group of self-advocate leaders with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are actively engaged in their community to address the concerns and needs of their peers throughout the State.

QUICK HIGHLIGHTS

Legislative Priorities

HB 320 - Supported Decision-Making Agreements (Act 284)

- Establishes a formal legal process allowing adults with disabilities to enter into supported decision-making (SDM) agreements as an alternative to guardianship.
- Promotes self-determination by enabling individuals to choose trusted supporters to assist with understanding, making, and communicating decisions—without relinquishing their legal rights.

SB 479 - ABLE Savings Program Modernization (Act 150)

- Establishes a new staff position within the Hawai'i State Council on Developmental Disabilities dedicated to outreach and education related to ABLE savings accounts.
- Authorizes the use of state trust fund resources to provide incentive payments, increasing participation and utilization of ABLE accounts.

HB 648 - Guardianship and Conservatorship Pilot Program (Act 208)

- Creates a two-year pilot program in the First Circuit (Probate and Family Court) to fund critical services for individuals involved in guardianship and conservatorship proceedings who cannot afford them.
- Supports access to professional evaluations and other necessary services to protect respondents' rights and ensure fairness in court proceedings.
- Appropriates \$200,000 to support the pilot program.

SB 850 - I/DD Health Disparities Data & Reporting (Act 275)

- Directs the State Council on Developmental Disabilities to collect, analyze, and report data on health disparities experienced by individuals with I/DD in Hawai'i.
- Appropriates \$550,000 to complete this work.
- Aims to establish a statewide baseline identifying systemic gaps in health access and outcomes, informing future legislation and resource allocation.



Legislative Priorities Continued...

HB 1477 - Needs Allowance & State Supplemental Payments (Act 45)

- Clarifies that the monthly needs allowance for individuals living in licensed long-term care settings does not reduce the State Supplemental Payment (domiciliary care rate); both benefits are intended to be provided in full.
- Serves as a corrective measure to a prior law that increased the needs allowance and domiciliary care rate but was implemented incorrectly due to technical issues.
- Act 45 resolves this issue, resulting in the proper and full increase of both the needs allowance and care rate for individuals residing in domiciliary care homes.

Guardianship/Conservatorship Working Group (Ongoing)

- The Council facilitates an informal legislative working group created by Representative Tarnas that began in 2024.
- This working group comprises representatives from both the Family and Probate Courts, as well as agencies and community members.
- The working group continues to meet monthly, discussing how Hawai'i can improve Guardianship and Conservatorship practices, courts, and laws.



Legislative Forums

Held four legislative forums covering Kauai, Maui, and Hawai'i counties in October. These forums are for the public to hear from their legislators regarding issues that face our intellectual/developmental disability community members.

Informal Legislative Briefing/Mock Hearing

The informal briefing was hosted by Representative Marten and her co-committee members, Representative Lee-Loy and Representative Iwamoto. The Council's 2026 legislative priorities were shared with the mock committee. Over 40 self-advocates (people with an intellectual and or developmental disability) gave mock testimony on political issues important to them. The goal of this event is to build confidence in providing testimony and interacting with the legislator for our I/DD community.

Day at the Capitol

In March, we held our annual Day at the Capitol Event, in which our stakeholders and community members come to the Capitol and participate in the legislative process. We had over 500 participants from across the State. Participants got to meet with their legislators, testify on measures, participate in a mock hearing, learn from PAR about the legislative process, and celebrate and spread awareness surrounding developmental disabilities awareness month.



AREAS OF EMPHASIS KEY ACTIVITIES 2025

Public Awareness, Education, & Training

- Created public awareness campaigns to promote Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month and National Disability Employment Awareness Month, including community sign-waving events.
- Developed and distributed promotional and educational materials to increase public awareness of intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).
- Engaged self-advocates in shaping public messaging and outreach activities related to disability awareness and inclusion.
- Provided Healthy Relationships trainings focused on sexuality, consent, and healthy relationships for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, utilizing six certified trainers.
- Delivered targeted trainings to strengthen families and service systems, including:
 - Parent trainings,
 - Trainings for Developmental Disabilities Division case managers, and
 - Trainings for Medicaid Waiver service providers.
- Provided education and outreach on ABLE Savings Accounts to increase understanding of financial tools that support independence without impacting public benefits.
- Supported Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) awareness efforts, including community education and public events.
- Presented at statewide conferences and community events to share information, resources, and best practices related to disability awareness and inclusion.
- Supported professional development for families and direct service professionals through trainings addressing complex support needs.
- Promoted civic engagement by sharing information about neighborhood boards, legislative forums, and opportunities for public participation.
- Collaborated with community partners, state agencies, and advocacy organizations to expand the reach of public awareness, education, and training efforts.
- Continued participation in the Hawai'i Islands Mayor's Committee on People with Disabilities to strengthen coordination across state and county disability initiatives.

Transportation Housing and Employment

- Strengthened cross-agency coordination on employment by supporting ongoing collaboration among DDD, DVR, DOE, ADRC, and community providers to improve employment pathways and outcomes for people with I/DD.
- Supported statewide implementation of the DDD–DVR MOU through case manager and provider trainings that clarified roles, improved referrals, and expanded employment service options.
- Identified and elevated systemic employment barriers, including workforce shortages, high vacancy rates, HR screening challenges, and transition gaps between student and adult services.
- Advanced housing as a core committee priority, with focused discussion on increasing housing options for people with I/DD—particularly on neighbor islands—and defining the Committee's role in supporting long-term housing strategies.
- Supported community-led housing advocacy and education, including efforts focused on Section 8, HUD housing, affordability, and consumer access to housing resources.
- Amplified self-advocate voices by centering lived experience related to transportation access, financial barriers, and the impact of service gaps on employment and housing stability.
- Promoted transportation access awareness, including discussion of public transit and Handy Van challenges affecting access to work, housing, and community participation.
- Supported disability employment awareness and public engagement, including ADA anniversary activities, legislative testimony, and preparation for Day at the Capitol.
- Began transitioning the Committee toward strategic planning, with early development of 2026 work plan goals integrating employment, housing, and transportation priorities.

Transition and Community Supports

- Advanced Supported Decision-Making from legislation to implementation.
- Developed, refined, and prepared for statewide rollout of a Supported Decision-Making Toolkit and agreement materials.
- Provided education and training on supported decision-making and alternatives to guardianship for educators, families, attorneys, and service providers.
- Supported Continuing Legal Education (CLE) and ethics-based trainings focused on guardianship and supported decision-making.
- Continued coordination with the Guardianship and Conservatorship Working Group to address system-level barriers and reforms.
- Identified and documented transition gaps from the Department of Education to adult services for individuals with I/DD.
- Informed development of the Five-Year State Plan by elevating transition, guardianship alternatives, and community support priorities.
- Contributed to legislative and systems planning impacting transition-age youth and adults with I/DD, including emergency preparedness, accessibility, and community-based supports.

Health, Children, & Youth

- Completed and published a statewide mental health and dual-diagnosis survey identifying unmet behavioral health needs of individuals with I/DD and their families across both urban and rural Hawai'i.
- Developed and disseminated plain-language educational materials explaining the differences between:
 - Intellectual Disabilities
 - Developmental Disabilities
 - Learning Disabilities
 - Mental Health diagnoses
- Including examples such as Autism and ADHD to support families, educators, and providers.
- Provided ongoing education and policy updates on Medicaid and Med-QUEST, including the approved 1115 Waiver and key changes such as continuous eligibility for children, medical respite services, and re-entry Medicaid access.
- Advanced early intervention and developmental screening efforts by completing early intervention resource booklets for most islands and continuing outreach to pediatricians and families on the importance of early screening.
- Created and distributed caregiver and workforce support resources, including caregiver burnout materials and a dementia care booklet, with translation work underway to increase accessibility.
- Successfully implemented activities under the Bridging Aging and I/DD Grant, including statewide Kupuna and Disability Resource Fairs to connect individuals with I/DD, caregivers, and families to health, aging, and disability resources.
- Elevated Smart911 as a statewide health and safety priority, using survey data to support inclusion in long-term planning and emphasizing the importance of emergency preparedness for individuals with I/DD and Access and Functional Needs populations.
- Identified and elevated critical transition challenges impacting children and youth, particularly transitions from early intervention to school systems and from youth to adult services.
- Completed all major Health & Children & Youth Committee work plan goals for the year, including survey development, educational resource creation, caregiver supports, and statewide outreach.

Self-Advocacy & Self-Determination

- Sustained and strengthened a statewide self-advocacy network, supporting active SAAC chapters across islands and maintaining engagement of 200+ self-advocates statewide through regular island and statewide meetings.
- Strengthened self-advocate visibility and leadership in public education and awareness efforts, including participation in ADA 35th Anniversary activities, disability awareness sign-waving events, and community outreach initiatives across multiple islands.
- Promoted healthy relationships and personal safety education, supporting self-advocates' participation in trainings such as Feeling Safe, Being Safe and reinforcing the importance of these topics being integrated into service planning and agency practices.
- Elevated key systems issues impacting people with I/DD, including housing access, transportation barriers, and the direct support professional workforce shortage, ensuring these issues are consistently raised in SAAC discussions and advocacy efforts.
- Strengthened cross-agency collaboration, using Statewide SAAC meetings as a platform for information-sharing and coordination with DDD, the Commission on Disabilities, SILC, service providers, and community partners.

DD COUNCIL AREA OF EMPHASIS COMMITTEES AND MEMBERS

Community Supports & Transition Committee

- Holly Manaseri, Chair
- Mary Brogan (sends proxy)
- Brandi-Lynn Hyden
- Josh Ige
- Deborah Kobayakawa
- Alysha Kim
- James Labrie
- Pina Lemusu
- Raymond Mamea
- Mark Vierra

Transportation, Housing & Employment Committee

- Hoopiokalani Balaz, Chair
- Mary Brogan (sends proxy)
- Melissa Gibo
- Alysha Kim
- Amanda Luning
- Leona Sa McDermott
- Cristina Valenzuela

Nominating Committee

- Melissa Gibo, Chair
- Raymond Mamea, Vice Chair
- Josh Goetz
- Deborah Kobayakawa

Public Awareness, Education & Training Committee

- Anne Chipchase, Chair
- Mary Brogan (sends proxy)
- Karen Glasser
- Howard Greenberg
- Brandi-Lynn Hyden
- Alysha Kim
- James Labrie
- Alana Souza

Health & Children & Youth Committee

- Alana Souza, Chair
- Anne Chipchase
- Karen Glasser
- Brandi-Lynn Hyden
- Alysha Kim
- Kiriko Takahashi
- Reinalyn Terrado
- Eden Watabayashi

THE COUNCIL OFFICES & CONTACT INFORMATION

Legal Authority

State Councils were established in response to the Federal Developmental Disabilities Services and Facilities Construction Act of 1970 (PL 91-517). Hawaii's Council was established in State Law by Act 198, Session Laws of Hawaii in 1975. The Council is administratively attached to the Department of Health. The Department serves as the Designated State Agency, providing fiduciary and administrative support. Although the Council operates in the state government, their federal law stipulates a non-interference law that allows the Council to maintain its autonomy, distinct independent role and responsibility.

Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities Contacts:

Main Office

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Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

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Neighbor Islands

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