

ADVISORY COMMISSION ON DRUG ABUSE AND CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES (HACDACS)

Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division (ADAD), Department of Health (DOH), State of Hawai'i

Kākuhihewa Building, 601 Kamokila Boulevard, Room 360, Kapolei, Hawai'i

January 27, 2026

9:00 am – 11:00 am

Members Present: Lilinoe Kauahikaua, MSW, Co-Chair; Dave Fields, Co-Chair; Vice-Chair; Emily Andrade, Kunane Drier, Jon Fujii; Ku ulei Salzer-Vitale, MSW; Jawanna Ready, MD.

Members Absent: John Paul Moses III ARPR-R.

Staff Present: John Valera, AICP; Robyn Loudermilk, AICP.

Guests Present Dr. Clifford Otto

AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION	RECOMMENDATIONS/ ACTIONS/ CONCLUSIONS	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	DUE DATE
1. Call to Order:	The meeting was called to order at 9:10 a.m.			
2. Consideration and approval of meeting minutes of October 28, 2025.	Motion by Commissioner Salzer-Vitale, seconded by Commissioner Drier to adopt minutes from the December 16, 2025, meeting. Motion unanimously approved.	Motion unanimously approved.		
3. Community Input: [Pursuant to section 92-3, Hawaii Revised Statutes, all interested persons will have three (3) minutes to speak, i.e., per person, per item, or written testimony can be submitted on agenda items]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No community input provided. 			
4. Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division (ADAD) Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2026 Legislative Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing and identifying bills related to substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery. 	Mr. Valera reported on the 2026 Legislative Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ADAD utilizes a tracking sheet to follow bills related to substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery. Bills are identified for testimony and for informational purposes. House Bill (HB) 814 Relating to Cannabis, appropriates funds to DOH to implement a public health information campaign and to administer grants for substance use treatment and prevention 			

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	<p>targeting youth. Scheduled for public hearing with the House Committee on Health this Friday (1-30-2026).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several bills introduced in the 2025 Session have been resurrected. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ HB 1084 and its companion Senate Bill (SB) 1403 Relating to Use of Intoxicants While Operation a Vehicle. ○ HB 1131 and its companion SB 1450 Relating to an Intensive Mobile Team Pilot Program for Houseless Individuals Suffering from Serious Brain Disorder. ○ There are also a number of bills related to clean and sober homes, driving while intoxicated, and cannabis informational campaigns. • Some bills introduced in the 2026 Session being tracked are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ HB 1550 and its companion SB 2419 Relating to Health propose to exclude drug testing products from the definition of drug paraphernalia under the Uniformed Controlled Substances Act. ○ SB 2285 and its companion HB 2157 Relating to Complex Patient Treatment proposes to appropriate funds to ADAD to contract with community-based organizations for a behavioral health complex patient model. ○ SB 2505 and its companion HB 2063 Relating to Opioid Use Disorder Treatment proposes to authorize paramedics to administer buprenorphine after administrating an opioid antagonist, requires DOH to establish a pilot program in one county, and submit a report to the Legislature evaluating program outcomes. These two 			

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	<p>bills are part of the Hawaii Association of Counties package.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deadline to introduce bills is tomorrow (1-28-2026). <p>Co-Chair Kauahikaua led the discussion on ADADs report.</p> <p>In response to questions Mr. Valera noted that none of the bills highlighted were proposed by the DOH. Explained that administration bills are introduced by the Governor through the Governors’ package. Explained that within the department, one agency takes the lead on testimony. For medical cannabis bills the Office of Medical Cannabis Control and Regulation (OMCCR) will take the lead.</p> <p>Mr. Valera relayed that ADAD will be working with the OMCCR and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division on bills introduced to legalize recreational marijuana. Will also work with the Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Division as they do tobacco prevention. Prevention messaging is that there are risks. Vaping can be a gateway drug.</p> <p>Co-Chair Kauahikaua wondered whether the department is open to other prevention messaging, such as focus on harm reduction, and consider the complexity around why people use certain substances.</p> <p>Mr. Valera relayed that the department is open to other prevention messaging.</p> <p>Commissioner Andrade was curious if the term gateway drug was still used. She commented that anything legally accessible and, on the market, could be construed as a gateway drug. And that certain</p>			

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	<p>audiences and age groups prefer not to use the term for reasons such as stigma.</p> <p>Commissioner Drier shared that he still hears the term gateway drug being used. However, when someone in recovery hears the term, it gives a bad rap. That for a person in recovery, anything can initiate a relapse. The term gives the general public the perception that one drug is worse than another drug. Suggest being aware of the audience when using terms.</p> <p>Co-Chair Kauahikaua commented that as person in recovery the use of the term gateway drug is very stigmatizing. It is definitely a generational term. She also commented that it is interesting learning about the legislative process and seeing what bills make it and hopefully cover some ground on how HACDACS can provide testimony.</p>			
<p>5. Update on meeting topics and presentations for HACDACS meetings in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February 2026 • March 2026 • April 2026 • May 2026 <p>Potential topics include statewide coordination of care services, status of residential treatment programs and their trends and needs, billing/reimbursement codes for culture, all payer claims database, ethics and culture in AI, virtual substance use disorder services, prevention initiatives, the intersection of substance use treatment and the criminal justice</p>	<p>Co-Chair Kauahikaua led the discussion on meeting topics and presentations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February 2026: All Payer Claims Database <p>The overarching theme for this year is the coordination of services with the following topics identified: 1) ethics and culture in AI; 2) how are treatment services providing culture services, how are these services being billed, and how should cultural services be billed; 3) virtual substance use care services; and 4) residential treatment programs.</p> <p>Co-Chair Kauahikaua shared that she is exploring a panel presentation on cultural services. Panel will be comprised of representatives from various treatment organizations that provide cultural services. Also shared that she has identify someone in mind to present on virtual substance use care. This person is a psychologist from the mainland who works with</p>		<p>Commissioner Fujii confirmed.</p>	

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<p>system. New topic ideas are also encouraged.</p>	<p>indigenous organizations and provides training on tele-health. Has previously provided training to Hawaii organizations such as Project Vision on Maui and the Big Island Substance Abuse Council as well as she teaches at Hawaii Pacific University during the summer.</p> <p>Considering reaching out to the Opioid Response Network for a speaker to talk about ethics and culture in AI. Also exploring organizations that may have speakers. A number of indigenous organizations have webinars on AI and culture. Co-Chair Kauahikaua will find and distribute webinars to members to see who might be helpful to the conversation.</p>			
<p>6. Open Forum:</p> <p>Public comments on issued not on the agenda, for consideration for Commissions agenda at its next meeting.</p>	<p>Dr. Clifford Otto thanked the commission for considering his request to make a presentation on the potential use of Marinol for pain management at their last meeting. As the minutes reflect an interest in the research, a link to his presentation to the Hawaii Overdose Initiative Action Team 4 on this topic to be provided.</p> <p>Shared that he has great interest in medical cannabis safety and testing policy. Concerned about the safety of products and safety of patients who continue to have to violate federal law to participate. Dr. Otto is not an advocate for recreational legalization. The state should stick with medical use.</p> <p>Also shared a few issues related to the state’s required testing of all dispensary products for potency and contaminants. All cannabis testing is done at one laboratory on Oahu. Requiring neighbor island dispensaries to ship samples to Oahu. An issue not being addressed is the integrity of samples being transported to Oahu. Another issue is that with only one lab, it is difficult to determine the accuracy of</p>			

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	testing. Lastly, there is a need for additional testing laboratories.			
8. Adjournment	10:00 a.m.			

Next Meeting: **February 24, 2026**
 9:00 am to 11:00 am
 Zoom Meeting