



OLAKINO MAIKA'I

To Improve Your Health and Well-Being



Vaccine History

Discover how Hawai'i's long history of vaccinations continues to protect our communities today.



Groundwater Basics

Dive into the hidden world beneath our feet, and learn why protecting groundwater is more important than ever.



Kalaupapa Legislation

The DOH would like your comments on legislation affecting historic Kalaupapa and the Kalawao Peninsula.

Maui Wildfires: A Healing Journey



Image credit: County of Maui/Kuhinia Maui

Aug. 8, 2025, marks two years since the devastating wildfires in Lahaina, a tragic anniversary that remains fresh in the minds of many on Maui and across the state. In a unique approach to healing, the County of Maui is hosting a variety of events:

- 9 a.m.: Paddle out at Hanakao'o Park
- Noon: Gathering at the county building
- 5:30 p.m.: Tribute at the Lahaina Amphitheater

Between these events, the Lahaina Comprehensive Health Center will welcome community members and providers for food, music, and healing activities. Partners, including Kanikapila Project, Maui Medics Healers Hui, and others, will offer ukulele music, acupuncture, lomi lomi massages, lei making, and arts and crafts.



Healing is a journey. Everyone grieves in their own way, and in their own time. If you or someone you know needs help, don't hesitate to reach out.

HAWAII CARES HELPLINE: 988

MO'OLELO OLAKINO

History of Health

Vaccines: They're nothing new

Vaccines have safeguarded communities for centuries, as early as smallpox inoculations in the 1700s and expanding to protect against diseases like polio, measles, and influenza. In Hawai'i, mass vaccination campaigns in the 20th century helped eradicate smallpox. Public health workers once traveled by boat and horseback to reach rural communities, bringing life-saving protection to every corner of the islands.



Image credit: Hawai'i State Archives

Today, vaccines continue to play a vital role in preventing outbreaks and keeping our keiki, kūpuna, and neighbors safe. While misinformation may cause hesitation, the science behind vaccines is grounded in history, evidence, and compassion. By choosing to vaccinate, we carry forward a legacy of care that has shaped generations of health and resilience in Hawai'i.

CHILDHOOD VACCINES

UNINSURED? NO PROBLEM



Measles Facts: Know the Risks. Protect Your 'Ohana.

August is National Immunization Awareness Month, and DOH's health experts continue to work to improve access, build trust, and support healthier communities. DOH focuses on listening to communities, meeting people where they are, and expanding access to accurate information and vaccines.

DOH teams conduct school and community visits, create public service announcements like this one [about measles](#), and promote the annual [Vax to School](#) campaign for incoming 7th graders (also, immunizations will be required for all students entering childcare or preschool, kindergarten, post-secondary school, and for students entering school in Hawai'i for the first time).

New tools like the upcoming [HiSIS](#) (Hawai'i State Immunization System) will make it easier for health professionals to keep track of immunizations. In the near future, the HiSIS Patient Portal access for individuals will become available.

CDC's VAXVIEW

LEARN MORE



Hawai'i Community
Health Workers

CLICK
FOR
MORE

One year ago, Governor Josh Green, M.D. proclaimed August 2024 to be Hawai'i Community Health Worker (CHW) Month, a time to recognize the dedicated individuals who serve as trusted bridges between communities and healthcare. CHWs help people access services, navigate health systems, and improve well-being through culturally rooted care. From supporting chronic disease management to promoting prevention, CHWs play a vital role in creating healthier communities across Hawai'i. Mahalo to all of our local health workers for your compassion, knowledge, and commitment to creating healthier communities. And please consider joining the team here at DOH!

DOH JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Perinatal Mental Health: Supporting Mothers, Strengthening Communities



When Leilani (name changed for privacy) gave birth to her second child, she expected the same joy she felt with her first. But the weeks that followed were filled with sleepless nights, overwhelming anxiety, and an unshakable sadness. “I didn’t feel like myself anymore,” she recalls. “I was ashamed to tell anyone.”

It wasn’t until a visiting community doula from the Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition gently asked her how she was really feeling that Leilani broke down – and began her journey toward healing. Her story is not unique. In fact, 1 in 5 mothers in Hawai'i may experience perinatal mood and anxiety disorders, often silently.

What Is Perinatal Mental Health?

Perinatal mental health refers to a mother's emotional and psychological well-being during pregnancy and the first-year postpartum. It is a time filled with transition, and for some, a period marked by mental health challenges such as depression, anxiety, trauma, or substance use.

Untreated perinatal mental health conditions can impact bonding, child development, and family well-being.

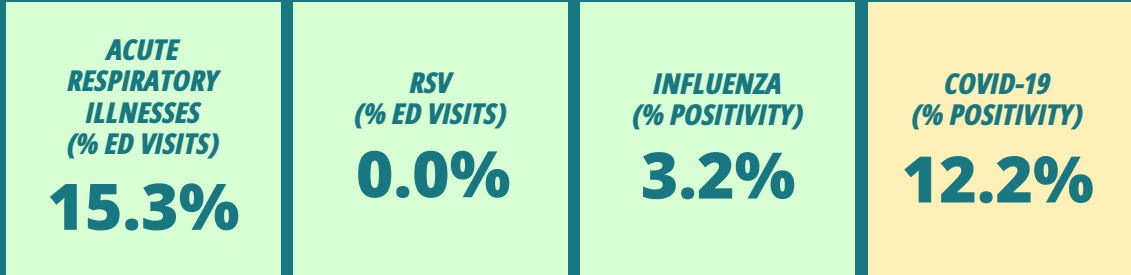
No one should struggle in silence. For help, or to refer a family in need, visit www.hmhb-hawaii.org or call (808) 737-5805.

GET HELP NOW

This Week's RSV and COVID-19 Data

HAWAII STATEWIDE RESPIRATORY DISEASE DATA DROP

UPDATED FRIDAY, AUGUST 1



TRENDING
LOW MEDIUM HIGH

This week's data shows low activity levels for acute respiratory illnesses (15.3% ED visits) and RSV (0.0% ED visits). Influenza (3.2% positivity) activity level is low, while COVID-19 (12.2% positivity) is medium.

VACCINE INFORMATION

RESPIRATORY DISEASE DASHBOARD

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH



International Overdose Awareness Day (Aug. 31) is a time to honor those lost, support grieving families, and promote compassion for those affected by substance use. In Hawai'i, it's also a call to action, encouraging education, destigmatization, and access to life-saving tools like naloxone.

The DOH is installing 155 naloxone distribution boxes statewide to expand free access to the medication, which reverses the effects of opioid overdoses.

Community members can attend events, receive training, or connect with local groups like the Hawai'i Island, Maui, or Kaua'i fentanyl task forces. By learning, sharing, and supporting one another, we can save lives and strengthen our communities.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



Dive into the hidden world beneath our feet: groundwater! Every island community relies on this vital resource, but most of us don't know how it works. The Department of Health's Hazard Evaluation and Emergency Response (HEER) Office, Safe Drinking Water Branch, and Solid and Hazardous Waste Branch recently hosted a four-part "Groundwater Basics" webinar series, covering:

- What an aquifer is and its importance
- How groundwater flows through rock formations
- How contaminants travel underground
- Cleanup strategies for polluted plumes

These 20-minute sessions included live Q&A with DOH scientists and aired Fridays from June 6-27. Missed them? No worries! The recordings are available on the [HEER Office YouTube page](#).

Want to learn more? Visit the HEER webinar page to view recordings, download slides, and find practical tips for safeguarding our groundwater.

GROUNDWATER BASICS WEBINAR

PUBLIC HEALTH



August is National Breastfeeding Month, and the Hawai'i Department of Health celebrates the efforts of Women, Infants & Children (WIC) Hawai'i. This special supplemental nutrition program provides not only nourishing supplemental foods, nutrition education, and social service referrals, but also breastfeeding promotion and support.

Benefits of Breastfeeding:

- **Optimal Nutrition:** Breast milk contains the perfect balance of nutrients tailored for infant growth and development.
- **Stronger Immune System:** Provides antibodies that help protect against infections, illnesses, and allergies.
- **Reduced Risk of Chronic Conditions:** Lowers the risk of asthma, obesity, type 1 diabetes, and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- **Supports Brain Development:** Linked to improved cognitive development and IQ scores.
- **Easier Digestion:** Breast milk is easier to digest than formula, especially for premature or newborn babies.
- **Bonding and Comfort:** Promotes secure attachment and emotional connection with the mother.

WIC Hawai'i offers free support, education, and tips for expectant mothers.

WIC HAWAII

SHORT TAKES

Heavy Metal: Protecting your home and your keiki from lead



Lead, a naturally occurring metal, can harm children's brain development even at very low levels. Young children absorb more lead due to hand-to-mouth behavior and rapid growth. At home, lead dangers often come from old paint, contaminated dust and soil, and older plumbing.

How to reduce risk:

- Have your home inspected if built before 1978 and avoid disturbing old paint
- Use wet cleaning methods, and remove shoes at the door to prevent indoor dust
- Use a HEPA filter vacuum instead of sweeping
- Run cold tap water before drinking or preparing formula
- Ensure keiki eat foods rich in calcium, iron, and vitamin C to reduce absorption
- Talk to your doctor about blood lead testing

Preventing lead exposure protects your child's growth, learning, and future.

GET THE LEAD OUT!

EXTRA

Feedback Requested on Proposed Kalaupapa Legislation

In 2025, a bill was introduced to the Hawai'i State Legislature to begin planning for the eventual conclusion of patient care services provided by the Department of Health (DOH) at Kalaupapa. Senate Bill 1432 proposed amending Hawai'i Revised Statutes Chapter 326 to reflect this transition and to clarify the administrative alignment of Kalawao with Maui County after DOH's role ends. The bill does not determine the long-term future of Kalaupapa lands, which remain under the jurisdiction of other state agencies. The proposal was shaped through years of community consultation and interagency dialogue. Public input is encouraged to help refine the bill ahead of the 2026 legislative session.

For more information on the Kalaupapa legislation and to contribute your thoughts, please click on the links below. Mahalo!

2025 VERSION OF THE BILL

FEEDBACK FORM

MORE INFO

***Please note that our DOH Punchbowl offices will be closed on Friday, August 15, in observance of Statehood Day.**

INFORMATION HOTLINES

DOCD Disease Reporting Line

Assistance with an outbreak of cases
O'ahu (808) 586-4586
Maui (808) 984-8213
Kaua'i (808) 241-3563
Hilo (808) 933-0912
Kona (808) 322-4877

DOH Hotline

Get information & resources
Call (808) 586-4400

Hawai'i CARES 988 Hotline

Local crisis counselors are available to help 24/7
Call or Text 9-8-8
or Call (808) 832-3100
or Call 1-800-753-6879

Mahalo to those of you who sent us topics you'd like to read about! Keep those suggestions coming! Email us at doh.comm@doh.hawaii.gov.

In Hawaiian, the word olakino refers to the state of health and well-being. The word "ola" means life and health, and the word "kino" means body. Olakino is generally considered to be the greatest wealth and great health that one can attain, not just of the body but holistically. Maika'i in Hawaiian means good or wellbeing.

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