



OLAKINO MAIKA'I

To Improve Your Health and Well-Being



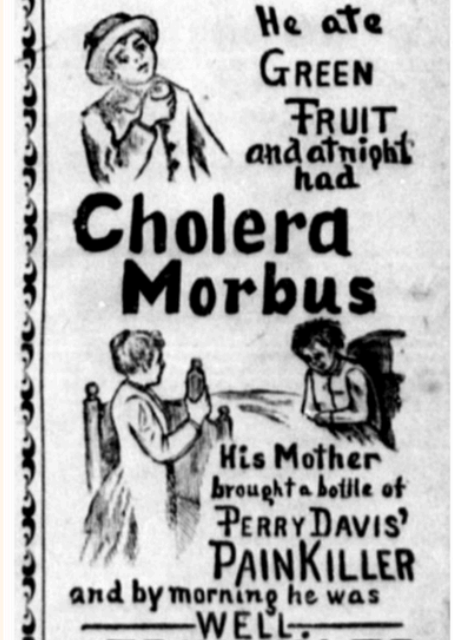
HHPP Launch

Find out how a growing DOH program is making health services more accessible, with local clinics offering vaccines and checkups for families statewide.



Suicide Prevention Month

Learn how DOH and community partners are working statewide to raise awareness, share resources, and support healing during Suicide Prevention Month.



Hawaiian Relief Society

Discover how Native Hawaiian women united during a cholera outbreak 129 years ago, inspiring community health efforts today.

Launch of the Healthy Hawai'i Partners Program (HHPP)



The Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) is excited to share that the Healthy Hawai'i Partners Program (HHPP) is growing! Building on the success of the Stop Flu at School program, HHPP (pronounced "HIP") brings schools, healthcare providers, and community groups together to make it easier for families to get important health services close to home.

After a successful pilot last year, HHPP is now active on Maui, Hawai'i Island, and O'ahu, with plans to expand to Kaua'i, Moloka'i, and Lāna'i by the end of the year. Services may include flu, COVID-19, and **school-required immunizations**, TB screenings, physical exams, and wellness checks – not just for students, but for school staff and the whole community.

Last year, HHPP hosted 47 clinics. This year, more than 350 school and community clinics are already on the calendar.

By working hand-in-hand with local partners, HHPP ensures care is convenient, culturally respectful, and available where people need it most.

Want to host or join? Email Esera Vegas at esera.vegas@doh.hawaii.gov.

Whooping Cough on the Rise in Hawai'i



The DOH is seeing an increase in pertussis cases, also known as whooping cough, across the state. Pertussis is a contagious respiratory illness that can be especially serious for infants, young children, and people with weakened immune systems, moderate to severe asthma, and other pre-existing health conditions. Symptoms often begin like a common cold but can progress to severe coughing fits. DOH encourages everyone to stay up to date on their vaccinations, including DTaP for infants and children and Tdap for adolescents and adults, to help protect your family and our community. If you have symptoms, contact your healthcare provider.

PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR COMMUNITY

MO‘OLELO OLAKINO

History of Health

‘Ahahui Hawai‘i Manawale‘a - Hawaiian Relief Society



In September, 129 years ago, Honolulu was in the grips of a major outbreak of Cholera, a disease caused by the bacterium *Vibrio cholerae*, usually spread through contaminated water or food. In response to this crisis, on Sept. 6, 1895, the ‘Ahahui Hawai‘i Manawale‘a, or Hawaiian Relief Society, was formed. Organized by Native Hawaiian women, the organization raised funds to provide care for patients afflicted by the disease. The organization consisted of many notable civic leaders of the day, including Princess Ka‘iulani, who raised funds and provided assistance to the afflicted. Over a period of 32 days from Sept. 7 to Oct. 12, the Hawaiian Relief Society provided nearly 300,000 meals to more than 100,000 people.

The ‘Ahahui Hawai‘i Manawale‘a is an inspiring example of how community-driven action can save lives and protect the health of the people of Hawai‘i. While cholera remains a global health concern in areas with poor sanitation, it is rare in the U.S. today thanks to our regular access to clean water and improved hygiene.

This Week's RSV and COVID-19 Data

HAWAII STATEWIDE RESPIRATORY DISEASE DATA DROP

UPDATED FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 5

**ACUTE
RESPIRATORY
ILLNESSES
(% ED VISITS)**
16.4%

**RSV
(% ED VISITS)**
0.1%

**INFLUENZA
(% POSITIVITY)**
1.5%

**COVID-19
(% POSITIVITY)**
10.6%

TRENDING
● LOW ● MEDIUM ● HIGH

This week's data shows low activity levels for acute respiratory illnesses (16.4% ED visits) and RSV (0.1% ED visits). Influenza (1.5% positivity) activity level is low, while COVID-19 (10.6% positivity) is medium.

VACCINE INFORMATION

RESPIRATORY DISEASE DASHBOARD

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH



For Kathleen Merriam, who has worked with the Hawai'i Department of Health's Adult Mental Health Division for 21 years, suicide prevention is deeply personal. After losing her brother Michael to suicide, she joined the Prevent Suicide Hawai'i Task Force to learn more and connect with others who shared her experience.

"I wanted to meet other people who had gone through this," Merriam said. "Meeting other survivors was a lifesaver." The task force provides training, awareness events, and support across every major island.

Merriam also participates in the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's Out of the Darkness Walks and the National Alliance on Mental Illness Hawai'i's [Mental Health Awareness Walks](#).

"They're energetic, family-friendly events that make it safe to talk about suicide and mental health while connecting to resources," she said.

Her family honors Michael's memory with prayers, rituals, and his favorite meal – pho – on his birthday. "Keeping Michael's memory alive has been very healing," Merriam said.

Between 2019 and 2023, more than 1,000 people in Hawai'i died by suicide. This September, DOH and partners encourage everyone to learn the warning signs, find support, and join prevention efforts.

SUICIDE
**PREVENTION
MONTH**
EVENTS



Throughout Suicide Prevention Month, events will be held statewide to raise awareness, support community healing, and connect people with resources.

These gatherings also provide opportunities to show support for survivors and promote hope.

**FIND AN EVENT
NEAR YOU**



PREVENT SUICIDE HAWAII TASK FORCE

TALK TO SOMEONE TODAY

LOST SOMEONE TO SUICIDE? SUPPORT IS HERE.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



Keeping your 'ohana safe from foodborne illness starts with good habits. In Hawai'i, two of the most common illnesses are Norovirus — spread by infected food handlers or contaminated surfaces — and Salmonella, found in raw poultry, unpasteurized dairy, and some produce.

The four keys to food safety are simple but essential:

Clean hands and surfaces **Separate** raw meats from ready-to-eat foods **Cook** meats to proper temperatures **Chill** foods promptly at 41°F or below. Leftovers should be refrigerated within two hours; sooner in hot weather.

Special events like lū'au, potlucks, and tailgates require extra care: Use designated servers, avoid reusing raw marinades, and store raw meats in separate coolers. During power outages, keep refrigerator/freezer doors closed; discard food above 41°F for over two hours.



The DOH has adopted amendments to the Hawai'i Food Safety Code that will expand opportunities for homemade food sales and increase food service flexibility for long-term care residents, among other changes.

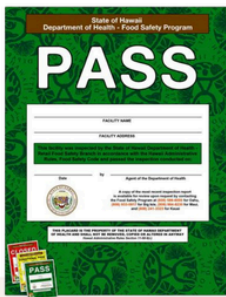
The amendments, effective Aug. 24, 2025, align state rules with the 2022 U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Model Food Code.

Key changes include allowing the sale of certain homemade foods like pickled or fermented plant products and allowing long-term care residents to request raw or undercooked foods (like sashimi or rare steak) if they sign an acknowledgement form. Food establishments may now allow pet dogs in outdoor dining areas under certain conditions.

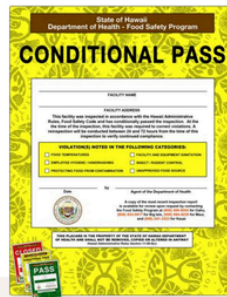
The updates also add sesame to the list of major food allergens that must be clearly identified for customers in writing.

FOOD SAFETY CODE UPDATES

Food Safety in Restaurants: A placard guide



Green:
One or fewer critical violations, all corrected on-site.
Safe to Operate.



Yellow:
Two or more critical violations, or a single violation that cannot be fixed immediately.
Follow-up usually within 2 business days.
Indicates a potential food safety risk.



Red:
Establishment Closed Immediately. Cannot reopen until violations are corrected and a follow-up inspection confirms safety.

LEARN MORE ABOUT FOOD SAFETY

PUBLIC HEALTH



Childhood obesity is a serious health concern that affects almost 1 in 3 children entering kindergarten in Hawai'i. Sugary drinks, processed snacks, and too much screen time can make it hard for young children to maintain a healthy weight.

What can families do?

- **Model healthy choices:** Eat plenty of fruits and veggies, drink water, and stay active together.
- **Make it fun:** Dance, play, cook together, and celebrate trying new fresh foods or playing active games
- **Talk with compassion:** Promote a positive body image by focusing on energy, growth, feeling good, and being strong.

Childcare centers and preschools also can play an important role in keeping keiki healthy. Ask if your child's provider follows **DOH recommended Wellness Guidelines for Nutrition and Physical Activity** and participates in Go Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (Go NAPSACC).

SHORT TAKES

September is National Recovery Month



September marks National Recovery Month, a time each year to celebrate individuals overcoming substance use and mental health challenges. The theme, "Recovery is REAL (Restoring Every Aspect of Life)" explores the role of health, home, community, and purpose in recovery. Recovery Month promotes evidence-based treatment, highlights the strength of recovery communities, and encourages support for those on their journey to wellness.

Celebrate Our Kūpuna: National Grandparents Day



In Hawai'i, we know that our kūpuna are at the heart of our 'ohana. National Grandparents Day – the first Sunday after Labor Day (Sept. 7 this year) – is a time to honor their wisdom, aloha, and the traditions they pass down from generation to generation. Whether it's sharing mo'olelo (stories), favorite recipes, or family photos, make time to connect with your kupuna wāhine and kupuna kāne.

KŪPUNA RESOURCES

HOME AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Big mahalo to everyone who shared story ideas with us. We love to hear from you! If there's a topic you'd like us to cover, please let us know at doh.comm@doh.hawaii.gov.

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

Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) Hawaii

The go-to source for Medicare Fraud Prevention

Education and referral assistance for related scams.

Toll Free: 1-800-296-9422

info@smphawaii.org

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.

Follow us on social media

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