



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR

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**NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION WEEK FOCUSES ON
“CHANGING THE LEGACY OF SUICIDE”**

HONOLULU - The 37th annual National Suicide Prevention Week is September 4 - 10, 2011, with the theme “Changing the Legacy of Suicide.” Starting Sunday, September 4, communities in Hawai‘i and across the United States are collaborating to host events to spread awareness of suicide prevention and the resources available to support this important effort.

A suicidal death is difficult for friends, family, and loved ones to fathom. Oftentimes, there are warning signs in the form of depression or a mental illness, and other times suicide strikes seemingly out of nowhere. Regardless of the motivation behind it, suicide is the most extreme case of self-harm, and for those who are contemplating such an act, know someone who might be at risk for suicide, or for those left behind, there are numerous resources available in Hawai‘i.

To promote these services and provide awareness to the nation and individual states, National Suicide Prevention Week is held from September 4-10, marking the days leading up to and after World Suicide Prevention Day on Saturday, September 10, 2011.

Hawai‘i state data on suicides:

- Hawai‘i ranks 43rd nationally in its rate of suicide deaths (or the 7th lowest rate in the nation).
- Suicide was the single leading cause of fatal injuries in Hawai‘i over the 2006-2010 time period, with an increasing trend in the annual rate of suicide among Hawai‘i residents.
 - Increasing trends were noticed for most age groups, except for 75 years and older
 - Victim age was widely distributed, although almost all (95%) were 19 years or older.
 - Elderly residents (85 years and older) and those in the 45 to 54 year age range had the highest fatality rates.
 - Male victims outnumbered females by approximately 3-to-1.
- Fatality rates among O‘ahu residents were 37% lower, compared to Neighbor Island residents; rates across Neighbor Island counties were similar.
- The most common mechanism was by hanging or suffocation (48%), followed by firearm use (19%), poisonings (14%), and jumps from high places (12%).
- According to 2009 Youth Risk Behavior Survey data, Hawai‘i high school students had the highest self-reported prevalence of considering suicide (19%), the highest for making a plan (16%), the highest for

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attempting (13%), and the 4th highest prevalence for being treated for a self-inflicted injury (4.5%) in the country. Data was available from 40 to 41 states for these comparisons; average prevalence was 15%, 12%, 8% and 3%, respectively.

- Among Hawai'i students, the prevalence of these risk factors was generally higher among female students, although there was an increasing trend in the self-reported attempts among males from 2003 to 2009 (from 9% to 12%), compared to a decreasing trend among females over that time (from 17% to 14%).

National data on suicides:

- Suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in the United States, with one suicide occurring on average every 15.2 minutes.
- Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death among 15- to 24-years-olds.
- The elderly make up 12.6% of the population, but comprise 15.7% of all suicides.
- Approximately 865,000 Americans attempt suicide each year.
- It is estimated that five million living Americans have attempted to kill themselves.
- Every year in the United States, more than 17,000 men and women kill themselves with a gun, two-thirds more than the number who use a gun to kill another person.
- An estimated 4.6 million Americans are survivors of the suicide of a friend, family member, or loved one.

2010 NEIGHBOR ISLANDS NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION (SP) WEEK EVENTS

Hawai'i Island:

Lead agency for SP Week: Hawai'i Family Guidance Center/Children and Adolescent Mental Health Division, Hawai'i State Department of Health

Contact for information on events: Charmaine Alameda at (808) 933-0607 or

charmaine.alameda@doh.hawaii.gov or Tracey Wise at 974-4305 or tracey.wise@doh.hawaii.gov

Other agencies collaborating on SP Week activities: Department of Education; Department of Health: Adult Mental Health Division, Developmental Disabilities Division, Hawai'i Family Guidance Center; County of Hawai'i: Office of Aging, Prosecutor's Office, Police Department; Care Hawai'i, Inc.; Hospice Hilo; Kokua Mental Health; HOPE; Veteran's Administration.

List of activities for SP Week: Suicide Awareness: Sign Waving in the following communities: Kau, Waimea, Kona, Honoka'a, Hilo, and Keaau.

SafeTALK training will be offered in the Honoka'a district. For more information contact Tracey Wise at 974-4305, tracey.wise@doh.hawaii.gov or JoAnn Balberde-Kamali'i at 974-4021 x2037.

Other information: Survivors of suicide interested in participating in a Memory Quilt making may contact Tracey Wise at (808) 974-4305 or tracey.wise@doh.hawaii.gov

Maui:

Lead agency for SP Week: Maui Community Mental Health Center/Department of Health

Contact for further information: Madeline Colon at (808) 984-2150 or madeline.dominguez@doh.hawaii.gov or Ann Nakagawa at (808) 244-6491 or ann.nakagawa@mpd.net

Other agencies collaborating on Suicide Prevention Week activities: Department of Education; Department of Health: Adult Mental Health Division; UH-Maui College; County of Maui-Office of Aging; Neighborhood Place; Maui Police Department; Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center

List of activities for SP Week: Tuesday, September 6 at 12 p.m.: Brown Bag Presentation - Suicide Survivors, Dr. Erin Cisneros, Cameron Center Auditorium

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Wednesday, September 7 at 3:30 p.m.: Mayor's Proclamation at UH Maui College, Hookipa "Wong" Conference Room; sign waving to follow on Ka'ahumanu Avenue.

Friday, September 9 at 6:30pm: "Koi Like the Fish" movie; UH Maui College, Ka Lama 103. (The movie depicts the story of a man struggling to keep his dignity when his choices have disappeared and his decisions are no longer his to make.) An interactive discussion with cast members will follow.

Other information: If you have survived a death of a loved one and would like participate in the Maui Memory Quilt or if you would like further information on any of these free Maui activities, contact Ann Nakagawa at (808) 244-6491 or ann.nakagawa@mpd.net, or Madeline Colon at (808) 984-2150 or Madeline.dominguez@doh.hawaii.gov

Kaua'i:

Lead agency for SP Week: Life's Bridges, Kaua'i

Contact for information: Gina Kaulukukui at (808) 651-6637 or rkaulukukui@hawaii.rr.com

Other agencies collaborating on SP Week activities: Kaua'i Police Department; Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center - Kaua'i Unit; Department of Education; Department of Health: Adult Mental Health Division and Public Health Nursing

List of activities for SP Week: Kauai's slogan for SP Week is H.O.P.E.S. (Helping Our People End Suicide). A safeTALK training is scheduled for Sept. 15th at Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center. There will be a proclamation signing with the Mayor's Office (date to be announced). Banners will be posted around Kauai to help kick off the media campaign.

In addition to the safeTALK training, the Kaua'i Mayor will sign a proclamation for Suicide Prevention Week and he regularly hosts a "talk story" program for Kauai's local cable station. Organizers for Suicide Prevention Week will be guests on the program, sharing information about suicide awareness. Banners will be posted at fire stations around the island and organizers will develop a radio spot and radio call-in programs.

Other information: If you have survived a death of a loved one and would like participate in the Kauai Memory Quilt or if you would like information on the Kauai Prevent Suicide Hawai'i Task Force, contact Gina Kaulukukui at (808) 651-6637 or rkaulukukui@hawaii.rr.com

O'ahu:

Lead agency for SP Week: Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center - Honolulu Unit, 1300 A Halona Street, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817

Contact for further information: Pua Kaninau-Santos at (808) 851-7731 or (808) 271-8582; kkaina@qlcc.org

Other agencies collaborating on Oahu SP Week activities: Hawai'i S.P.E.A.R.; Mental Health America of Hawai'i; Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center - Honolulu Unit; Survivors of Suicide Grief Group; Prevent Suicide Hawai'i Task Force (PSHTF) members, agencies, and organizations; Department of Health: Injury Prevention and Control Program and Children and Adolescent Mental Health Division

Lieutenant Governor's Proclamation for National Suicide Prevention Week:

Join PSHTF members at the Lieutenant Governor's office on the 5th floor of the State Capitol on Friday, September 9 at 11 a.m. for a proclamation ceremony for National Suicide Prevention Week.

Sept. 6 – 7, ASIST training – Kona

Sept. 9 – Suicide Prevention Awareness Event – Fort Shafter (speaking to troops, family, staff)

Sept. 10 – Suicide Prevention Awareness Event – Fort Shafter (speaking to troops, family, staff)

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Survivors of Suicide Healing Conference planned for Nov. 16 or 17 at the Elks Club, Honolulu – date to be announced.

For more information, on National Suicide Prevention Week, please contact Nancy Kern at the Injury Prevention and Control Section of the Hawai'i State Department of Health at: (808) 733-9238 or nancy.kern@doh.hawaii.gov

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