



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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**TOOLS FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION & INTERVENTION
CONFERENCE**

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i State Department of Health is sponsoring Hawai'i's second statewide suicide prevention conference, *Tools for Suicide Prevention & Intervention*, on November 21 at the Pacific Beach Hotel. Professional health and social services workers, those affected by suicide, and the public are urged to attend. Registration is required by October 31, 2008. Co-sponsors of the conference are the Suicide Prevention Task Force, the Hawai'i Suicide Prevention, Education, Awareness, and Research (S.P.E.A.R) Foundation, HMSA, and The Queen's Medical Center.

The conference is part of an ongoing collaborative effort to address a major public health challenge in the state. One person dies by suicide every three days in Hawai'i (an average of 120 residents per year), making this the second leading cause of injury death in the state. For every suicide, there are about 12 attempts. Hawai'i youth are at particularly high risk of suicide attempts compared with other states. From the 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System survey, administered in 39 states, Hawai'i had:

- The second highest percent of youth reporting they "felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for two or more weeks in a row" at 31.8 percent (Arizona was highest: 32.5 percent)
- The second highest percent of youth reporting they "seriously considered attempting suicide" at 18.5 percent (New Mexico was highest: 19.3 percent)
- The second highest percent of youth reporting they "made a suicide plan" at 17.0 percent (Wyoming was highest: 17.8 percent)

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- The third highest percent of youth reporting they “attempted suicide” at 12.0 percent (New Mexico was highest: 14.3 percent, followed by North Carolina: 13.3 percent)
- The 12th highest percent of youth reporting their “suicide attempt was treated by a doctor or nurse” at 3.0 percent (New Mexico was highest: 4.8 percent)

“The Department of Health has been working closely with our partners to set up a statewide system of training people to recognize and respond to individuals who are at-risk for suicide,” said Health Director Chiyome Fukino, MD. “We’ve also worked with our community partners to sponsor this Suicide Prevention Conference, our second in two years.”

Dr. David Rudd is the conference keynote speaker and will be talking about assessing and managing suicidal persons. Dr. Rudd is professor and chair of the Department of Psychology at Texas Tech University and the author of numerous books and articles on assessing and treating persons who are suicidal. He is past-president of the American Association of Suicidology.

Other speakers will also share their expertise within four broad categories:

Interventions/Treatments, Protective Factors/Prevention, Postvention, and Community Resources. Speaking on “Suicide in Hawai‘i” are Drs. Iwalani Else, Dan Galanis, and Dan Alicata. There are sessions on addressing suicide in the schools, using crisis and emergency services, strategies for reducing suicidal risk for gay youth, the family in suicide intervention, support for survivors of suicide, the role of faith-based organizations, and what the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is doing to address the needs of veterans.

Conference details and registration information is posted on the Department of Health website at www.hawaii.gov/health. For further information, call 733-9238.

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