The Health of Our Communities

The last few years have brought a unique set of challenges. In a world that has had to shift to new ways of operating, it has also brought new opportunities and growth. We believe this year there will be many opportunities to support the health and well-being of our communities. The 2023 legislative session brings the start of a new biennium that welcomes a new administration, new legislators, new ideas, and new beginnings. Excited to begin the journey through this session, we have put together the 2023 public health agenda to share our policy priorities with you.

As always, our policy work is focused on uplifting the health of individuals and our communities. These policies have been crafted to create resiliency by uplifting the overall health of individuals in the places where they live, work, learn and play. At Hawai‘i Public Health Institute (HIPHI), we collaborate with public health experts, community partners, advocates, government agencies, and policymakers across the state to identify and advance public policy priorities that align with HIPHI’s mission and continually strengthen the health of our communities.

We are excited to share our 2023 policy agenda with you. We seek to collaborate with various organizations, bring people together, and dream big. We hope to work with you in 2023 to implement our shared values and pass legislation to advance public health, address inequities, and leave a legacy of healthier and stronger communities.

Jessica Yamauchi
CEO, Hawai‘i Public Health Institute

Coalition for a Tobacco-Hawai‘i

Enacting Regulations on E-Cigarettes through Taxation, Licensing - Permitting & Online Sales

Electronic smoking devices, or e-cigarettes, are not taxed or regulated the same as other tobacco products, which makes them less expensive and more accessible. By passing the same regulations on all tobacco products, we will create clarity for consumers, close loopholes, make it easier to enforce existing laws, and stop our keiki from easily accessing these deadly tobacco products.

Preemption

Counties need the ability to quickly address the youth vaping epidemic impacting their communities.

End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco

Flavors in tobacco products entice youth, while the nicotine keeps them hooked for life. Ending the sale of flavored tobacco products will protect our keiki from a lifetime of addiction and advance health equity—disparities in tobacco use are due to the tobacco industry’s history of marketing menthol cigarettes to youth and people of color.
**Hawai‘i Farm to School Hui**

**Agriculture Education**
Comprehensive, aligned agriculture education is necessary to grow the next generation of farmers, who are needed to increase the agriculture workforce and reach local food security. This measure establishes and funds a P-20 Agriculture Education Coordinator at UH-CTAHR, who would oversee the agriculture education program, collaborate with the agriculture education working group, and lead the implementation plan.

**Hawai‘i Oral Health Coalition**

**Increase Accessibility to Oral Health Providers**
In 2022, preventive and restorative dental care services for adult Medicaid recipients were reinstated after being cut in 2009. In order to meet the increased demand, more community oral health providers are needed. One way to increase access to dental care is to change the Hawai‘i Dental Practice Act to allow graduates from ADA CODA (American Dental Association Commission on Dental Accreditation) to practice in Hawai‘i.

**Hawai‘i Alcohol Policy Alliance**

**Lowering the Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC)**
Lowering the BAC from 0.08 to 0.05 helps to decrease drunk driving related auto incidences, thereby preventing harm to the driver and others. Driving is impaired at 0.05 BAC for the majority of individuals regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, and drinking experience.

**Obesity Prevention Task Force**

**DA BUX**
DA BUX Double Up Food Bucks is a triple-win solution because it doubles the purchasing power of SNAP recipients when they buy Hawai‘i-grown produce; it supports local farmers with an increased customer base; and it benefits the economy by keeping dollars in the local community. This bill dedicates state funding, which is matched by federal funding, to the program, doubling the state’s investment.

**Safe Routes to School**
The goal of Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs is to ensure that every child in Hawai‘i has the infrastructure, social support, confidence, and skills to bike, walk, roll or bus to school. Ensuring safe and active passage to and from school helps our keiki to reach their recommended daily active movement as well as to help decrease absenteeism. It even helps to decrease the amount of air pollution around schools caused by idling vehicles. This bill will improve accountability for SRTS programs and policies by requiring a statewide strategic plan, data collection on programs, a full-time SRTS coordinator at the Department of Transportation to increase school and community participation, to provide strategic leadership for SRTS related county initiatives, and to assist with accessing the available federal funds to increase programs statewide.

For more information about Hawai‘i Public Health Institute’s legislative priorities, please contact Peggy Mierzwa, Policy and Advocacy Director at peggy@hiphi.org or (808) 591-6508 x 6.
Other Public Health Priorities

Drug-Free Coalitions: Ensure public health measures are in place in recreational cannabis legislation, including but not limited to prohibiting the sale of recreational cannabis to those under the age of 21, applying clean air laws, and other policies to ensure the safety of our communities.

Community Safety: Support policies that address safe, comprehensive gun regulation are necessary for public safety as gun ownership laws change.

Kūpuna Collective: Support access and expand digital platforms for our kūpuna; and support age-friendly policies to support the safety and mobility of our kūpuna.

Food Access: Increase SNAP eligibility, enrollment, benefits, and participation rates; support the Department of Education to reach 30% locally-sourced food by 2030; and remove barriers for schools to easily purchase locally sourced foods.

Access to Care: Support policies that ensure all individuals can access reproductive healthcare; support the expansion of technical infrastructure; develop the use of telehealth; and create a digitally equitable state.

Health of Families: Ensure Paid Family Leave is available and accessible; and support early childhood education for all families.

ABOUT HAWAI‘I PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTE

MISSION

To advance the health and wellness of the people and islands of Hawai‘i. To achieve our mission, we:

• Expand understanding of what creates health of people and place, embracing upstream social, cultural and environmental factors.
• Foster partnerships among public health, health care, and other diverse sectors to improve health and wellness.
• Cultivate programs — including education, advocacy, research, capacity building and training — to improve policies, systems, and the environments where people live, learn, work, age, and play.

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