



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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For Immediate Release: August 28, 2007

07-64

**DOH UNVEILS FIRST STATEWIDE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY & NUTRITION
PLAN FOR HAWAI'I**

HONOLULU – Today, the Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH) Healthy Hawai'i Initiative (HHI) released the *Hawai'i Physical Activity and Nutrition Plan* to increase physical activity and healthy eating among Hawai'i residents. The plan was presented at Washington Place to representatives from agencies across the state. The event also provided an opportunity for key individuals and agencies to join the newly formed Physical Activity and Nutrition Coalition.

In his opening remarks, Lt. Governor James "Duke" Aiona Jr. stressed the importance of ensuring everyone has easy access to healthy food and a safe place to exercise.

"To achieve goals for healthy living we need to re-think how our individual behavior is influenced by the structure of our communities, workplaces and schools," Lt. Governor Aiona said. "We have to change the options available around us so that these support healthy behaviors." Lt. Governor Aiona praised the collaborative efforts of agencies in developing the Plan and emphasized the need to continue to work together to create "communities of health."

"Eating one more fruit and one more vegetable a day and engaging in 30 minutes of moderately intense physical activity a day can help lower rates of obesity, heart disease, stroke and some cancers," Health Director Chiyome Fukino, M.D., said. In 2005, about 1 in 5 people in Hawai'i were considered obese and heart disease continues to be Hawai'i's leading cause of death." In 2005, more than 2,200 people in Hawai'i died of heart disease.

(more)

The *Hawai'i Physical Activity and Nutrition Plan* is the outcome of six meetings, held between October 2005 and April 2006, during which a multi-disciplinary group of private and public stakeholders submitted a broad range of strategies to improve physical activity and nutrition among Hawai'i residents. The groups represented a cross-section of community organizations, government agencies, and nonprofit programs. Data on obesity, chronic diseases and physical activity and nutrition among Hawai'i residents was used to drive plan development. Some examples of the Plan strategies are:

- Encourage employers to implement wellness policies and programs that encourage healthy food choices and physical activity
- Establish and implement state and school policies to increase nutritional value of food distributed in the cafeteria, school store, vending machines, fundraising, and at school events
- Increase the number of health insurance carriers that reimburse physical activity, weight management and nutrition classes
- Create environments that are safe and supportive for students to walk and bike to school by creating accessible sidewalks, bike lanes, crosswalks, and "walking school buses"

The Plan also contains current physical activity, nutrition and related health data for adults and youth in Hawai'i. To implement the Plan, the DOH is supporting the start of a new State Physical Activity and Nutrition Coalition to set priorities for statewide activities and strategies. To learn more about getting involved interested agencies and individuals can contact the DOH HHI at 586-4486. The plan can be viewed next week at www.healthyhawaii.com.

The DOH's Healthy Hawai'i Initiative focuses on three main areas to prevent chronic diseases in Hawai'i: freedom from tobacco use, increasing physical activity, and good nutrition. HHI is evidence based, data driven and project activities are evaluated through a partnership with the University of Hawaii.

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