



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR

CHIYOME LEINAALA FUKINO M.D.
DIRECTOR
Phone: (808) 586-4410
Fax: (808) 586-4444

For Immediate Release: March 10, 2008

08-16

**DOH SPONSORS ACTIVE LIVING COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS
ON THE LEEWARD COAST**

HONOLULU –The Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH) Healthy Hawai'i Initiative (HHI) will be hosting Active Living Community Workshops in four locations along O'ahu's Leeward Coast. The workshops are a follow-up to the first statewide Physical Activity & Nutrition Summit sponsored by the Department of Health, Healthy Hawai'i Initiative, in October 2007.

Active Living Communities are communities designed to provide opportunities for people to engage in routine daily physical activity and healthy eating. Active living is promoted by having bicycle and pedestrian friendly designs, mixed-use developments, recreational facilities, and schools located in walkable neighborhoods.

In 2006, adult obesity rates in the Nanakuli-Wai'anae area were 40.4 percent, double the state average of just over 20 percent. In the same year, adult diabetes prevalence in the Nanakuli-Wai'anae area was 16.4 percent compared to the state average of about 8 percent.

Numerous studies show that people in activity friendly environments are more likely to be physically active in their leisure time on a regular basis. For example, those who live in neighborhoods with a mix of shops and businesses within walking distance have a 35 percent lower risk of obesity.

"Environmental factors have a strong influence on healthy behaviors," stated Director of Health Chiyome Fukino, M.D. "The design of our communities holds tremendous potential for addressing many of Hawai'i's public health concerns, including obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, asthma, injury, and depression."

Mark Fenton, who will facilitate the workshops, is a nationally recognized expert in walkable, bicycle-friendly community policies and designs and their public health impact. Last year, Fenton worked with communities on the Big Island through a partnership with Mayor Harry Kim, the Hawai'i County Planning Department and the Department of Health, Healthy Hawai'i Initiative. In these workshops, Fenton, introduced the concepts of complete streets and connected communities, safe pedestrian and bike paths and encouraged their inclusion in several Hawaii County Community Development Plans.

"Community design is one of the keys to healthy neighborhoods," stated Fenton. "In the Active Living Community Workshops, our goal is to provide participants the tools they need to create a healthy and safe place to live, work and play."

The DOH has been working with Leeward Coast legislators to plan the workshops and promote community members' attendance. Workshop promotion is also being done through Leeward schools, churches, community agencies, and businesses.

The workshops are a part of the continuing effort of the DOH to engage the community in increasing opportunities for healthy living. The public is encouraged to attend the workshops:

- Makaha Elementary School – March 15, 2008, 9 a.m. - 11 a.m.
- Nanaikapono Elementary School (Nanakuli) – March 17, 2008, 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.
- Keone'ula Elementary School ('Ewa) – March 18, 2008, 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.
- Kapolei High School – March 19, 2008, 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.

For more information or to sign up for a workshop call 586-4495.

The Active Living Community Workshops are part of the Healthy Hawai'i Initiative's social-ecological approach to reduce the burden of chronic disease in Hawai'i by encouraging physical activity, healthy eating and living tobacco free on multiple levels; individual, interpersonal, institutional, community and public policy levels. For more information on HHI visit www.healthyhawaii.com.

###

For more information contact:

Nalani Aki, Community Programs Coordinator
Department of Health, Healthy Hawai'i Initiative
Phone: (808) 586-4526
E-mail: nalani.aki@doh.hawaii.gov

Alice Silbanuz, Public Education Coordinator
Department of Health, Healthy Hawai'i Initiative /
Communications
Phone: (808) 586-4434
E-mail: alice.silbanuz@doh.hawaii.gov