

KAUA'I COUNTY HOUSING AGENCY

ADAM ROVERSI, DIRECTOR



DEREK S.K. KAWAKAMI, MAYOR
MICHAEL A. DAHLIG, MANAGING DIRECTOR

Testimony of Farah Aquino

Homeless Coordinator, Kaua'i County Housing Agency

Before the

Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

March 22, 202; 1:00 PM

Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

In consideration of

Senate Resolution No. 52 and Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 64

Honorable Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee:

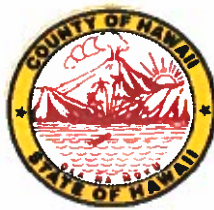
On behalf of the County of Kaua'i Housing Agency, I **strongly support** Senate Resolution No. 52 and Concurrent Resolution No. 64, which urges the State and Counties to prioritize and direct all available resources to supporting coordinated interagency collaboration and public-private partnerships to address the ongoing fentanyl epidemic. As the Homeless Coordinator, I have known too many people who have died as a direct result of fentanyl on our small island.

Across Hawai'i, every twenty-eight hours, someone dies from a drug overdose. Increasingly, these overdose deaths are being caused by opioids such as fentanyl. I consider this a public health emergency.

Defeating the war on fentanyl will require collaboration and building coalitions beyond our island shores. We strongly urge you to pass Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 64 to help our island communities beat this epidemic and save lives.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.





Mitchell D. Roth
Mayor

Deanna S. Sako
Managing Director

Robert H. Command
Deputy Managing Director

County of Hawai‘i
Office of the Mayor

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March 21, 2024

Committee on Health and Human Services
Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

Hawai‘i State Legislature
415 S. Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai‘i 96813

Subject: **SCR 64/ SR 52**
Hearing Date: Friday, March 22, 2024, at 1:00 p.m.
Time/Place of Hearing: Via Videoconference, Conference Room 225

Aloha Honorable Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and members of the Committees on Health and Human Services,

On behalf of the County of Hawai‘i, I express my strong **support** for **SCR 64/SR 52**, urging the State and Counties to prioritize and direct all available resources to supporting coordinated interagency collaboration and public-private partnerships aimed at addressing the ongoing fentanyl epidemic.

In 2017, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services declared the opioid crisis a public health emergency. In 2022 the opioid epidemic was marked by a further increase in individuals with opioid use disorder, with fentanyl causing 72% of the record 110,000 U.S. overdose deaths in 2022. Hawai‘i and especially Hawai‘i Island are experiencing this deadly epidemic, Federal data have indicated that there is now an overdose death every 7 days on Hawai‘i Island, many of those involving fentanyl. For every fatal overdose, there are approximately 14 non-fatal overdoses. Hawai‘i Island EMS data indicates that Hawai‘i County first responders reverse two overdoses a week, overwhelming care providers and resulting in medical, social, judicial, and economic consequences.

The Hawai‘i Island Fentanyl Taskforce was established in 2021, with a mission to reduce the demand and supply of illicit drugs in all age groups, especially fentanyl, through education, prevention, treatment, harm reduction and recovery support activities, as well as supporting law enforcement and judicial initiatives. Now in its 3rd year, there is an emergent need to plan for the future.

I strongly **support SCR 64/ SR 52** directing comprehensive resources to address the ongoing fentanyl epidemic. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

Mitchell D. Roth
Mayor
County of Hawai‘i

SR-52

Submitted on: 3/20/2024 5:05:56 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Peter Tuiolosega Silva	Testifying for Kumukahi Health + Wellness	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Peter Tui Silva and I am writing in strong support of SR52 on behalf of our organization, Kumukahi Health + Wellness. This resolution supports the important work that is happening on our island to address the growing overdose crisis affecting our keiki, opio, makua and kupuna. Please help us save lives by supporting this resolution.



**Testimony of
THE HAWAII ISLAND FENTANYL TASK FORCE**

**Before the Senate Committee on
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

Friday, March 22, 2024

1:00 PM

State Capitol Room 225 & Videoconference

**In support of
SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 52 URGING THE STATE AND COUNTIES TO PRIORITIZE AND
DIRECT ALL AVAILABLE RESOURCES TO SUPPORTING COORDINATED INTERAGENCY
COLLABORATION AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS AIMED AT ADDRESSING THE
ONGOING FENTANYL EPIDEMIC.**

The Hawai'i Island Fentanyl Task Force **strongly supports** Senate Resolution No. 52, which urges the State and Counties to prioritize and direct all available resources to supporting coordinated interagency collaboration and public-private partnerships to address the ongoing fentanyl epidemic.

Across Hawai'i, every twenty-eight hours, someone dies from a drug overdose. Increasingly, these overdose deaths are being caused by opioids such as fentanyl. We consider this a public health emergency and are ringing the alarm.

This epidemic can be stopped by addressing the root causes of drug use, expanding access to treatment and harm reduction strategies, providing prevention through education, and reducing the supply of illicit opioids entering our islands – all are active initiatives of the Hawai'i Island Fentanyl Task Force. These initiatives are essential but insufficient if we don't activate our community's awareness.

Defeating the war on fentanyl will require collaboration and building coalitions beyond our island shores. We strongly urge you to pass Senate Resolution No. 52 to help our island communities beat this epidemic and save lives.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.



To: Committee on Health and Human Services

Hearing Date/Time: Friday March 22, 1pm

Re: Testimony in Support of SCR 64/SR 52

From: Heather Lusk, Hawaii Health and Harm Reduction Center

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino and members of the committee:

The Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHRC) **supports SCR 64/ SR 52** which urges the state and counties to prioritize and direct all resources available to supporting interagency collaboration and public-private partnerships addressing the opioid overdose crisis in the islands.

HHRC's mission is to *reduce harm, promote health, create wellness and fight stigma in Hawaii and the Pacific*. We focus our efforts on those disproportionately affected by social determinants of health, including but not limited to: people living with and/or affected by HIV, hepatitis, substance use, and the transgender, LGBTQ and the Native Hawaiian communities.

HHRC has been on the forefront of responding to the opioid crisis and was the first community agency in the islands distributing naloxone and conducting trainings. Our experience has been that this complex issues can only be solved by partnership and collaboration and we all need to model after Hawaii County and their Hawaii Island Fentanyl Task Force that has not only saved lives, but done with opioid settlement dollars than anyone else.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Heather Lusk, Executive Director, Hawaii Health and Harm Reduction Center

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SR-52

Submitted on: 3/21/2024 4:01:21 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Doris Matsunaga	Testifying for North Hawaii Community Action Network	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo for scheduling a hearing on SR52 - also mahalo again for supporting distribution of fentanyl test strips last session.

The Hawai'i Island Fentanyl Task Force continues its united collaboration to address this deadly issue with strong support from federal, state and county agencies, not for profit service providers, and inspiring "boots on the ground" volunteers, however, the death rate shared with us earlier this week (CDC data) in Hawai'i is now one death every 28 hours and on Hawai'i Island, one death every 7 days. (Was previously one every 8 days.)

The urgency is greater. Please support this concurrent resolution.

Doris Segal Matsunaga

on behalf of North Hawaii Action Network

Indivisible Hawaii

SR-52

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 3:22:54 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mark Gordon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha All

As a member of the Hawai'i Island Fentanyl Task Force (HIFTF), as well as a Safety Manager, I request your staunch support of SCR 64 and SR 52 Resolutions. As the fentanyl crisis expands daily, we are seeing at least 1 person/hour dying of a fentanyl overdose in the State of Hawai'i, with the highest use of fentanyl being on the Big Island.

The HIFTF and other organizations are doing excellent work in educating the public on the extremely dangerous use of fentanyl, even a very minute dose. There are Narcan vending machines on the East side of Hawai'i Island. Unfortunately do to limits in funding of the HIFTF and other similar organizations there is only 1 vending machine in the Kona area (and it is in a nonpublic area) and none in the N and S Kohala areas.

The HIFTF in the last few months had Free Narcan Give Aways on both sides of Hawai'i Island. We needed to stop distribution due to a shortage of supply of Narcan. Besides funding for Narcan, more funding needs to be approved for educating the public via in person presentations, media and government releases. Some of the Narcan supply for the State is provided through Federal funding. This is limited since the amount of Narcan distributed in a lot of cases is decided on the population size of the State, regardless of if fentanyl use is higher in smaller States.

We encourage you to please Support both SCR 64 and SR 52 Resolutions

Thanks for sharing these Resolutions.

Mark Gordon, Waikoloa

SR-52

Submitted on: 3/20/2024 11:50:05 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patti Cook	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo for scheduling a hearing on SR52 and SCR64 - also mahalo again for supporting distribution of fentanyl test strips last session.

The Hawai'i Island Fentanyl Task Force continues its united collaboration to address this deadly issue with strong support from federal, state and county agencies, not for profit service providers, and inspiring "boots on the ground" volunteers, however, the death rate shared with us earlier this week (CDC data) in Hawai'i is now one death every 28 hours and on Hawai'i Island, one death every 7 days. (Was previously one every 8 days.)

The urgency is greater. Please support this concurrent resolution.

MAHALO, Patti Cook 808-937-2833 - Waimea, Island of Hawai'i

SR-52

Submitted on: 3/20/2024 1:10:05 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristin Hennig	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Kristin Hennig
PO Box 1387
Keaau, Hawaii 96778
alohakristinhennig@gmail.com
(808) 384-5396

March 20, 2024

Aloha!

I am writing to offer my strong support for Bill Hawaii SR52, which addresses the critical issue of fentanyl support in Hilo. As a member of the community deeply affected by the devastating consequences of fentanyl abuse, I believe that urgent action is needed to combat this crisis and save lives.

Fentanyl, a synthetic opioid, has become an epidemic across the nation, and its impact is felt acutely in communities like Hilo. The proliferation of fentanyl has led to a dramatic increase in overdose deaths, shattered families, and overwhelmed our healthcare and law enforcement systems.

Bill Hawaii SR52 represents a crucial step forward in addressing the fentanyl crisis by providing much-needed resources for support services in Hilo. These services are essential for prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts, as well as for supporting individuals and families affected by fentanyl addiction.

Through my own personal experience and witnessing the struggles of others in my community, I understand the urgency of this issue. Fentanyl addiction does not discriminate—it affects people of all ages, races, and socioeconomic backgrounds. By supporting Bill Hawaii SR52, we can take a proactive approach to saving lives and preventing further harm.

I urge you to stand with the people of Hilo and prioritize the passage of Bill Hawaii SR52. Now is the time for decisive action to address the fentanyl crisis and provide support to those in need. Together, we can make a difference and build a healthier, safer community for all.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Kristin Hennig

SR-52

Submitted on: 3/20/2024 3:37:20 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Charmaine Higa McMillan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this resolution to address the ongoing/worsening fentanyl epidemic in Hawaii.

SR-52

Submitted on: 3/20/2024 4:51:50 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeffrey H. Chester, DO	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As an addiction medicine physician, practicing in Hawaii for more than two decades, with addiction medicine board certifications through both the American Board of Addiction Medicine, as well as the American Board of Preventive Medicine, I fully support this essential bill.

-Dr. Jeffrey H. Chester, DO

SR-52

Submitted on: 3/20/2024 6:06:06 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dennis Lin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Please support this important resolution. Fentanyl is taking lives everyday in Hawaii. We need to address this crisis that is taking away young lives.

Mahalo.

SR-52

Submitted on: 3/20/2024 6:06:22 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaleialoha Pascua	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It is imperative that we serve our community to continue to assist in education and preventative measures regarding the rising fentanyl usage and over doses her in the state of Hawai'i.

03/20/2024

The Honorable Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
and Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

**IN SUPPORT OF SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 52 URGING THE STATE AND COUNTIES TO
PRIORITIZE AND DIRECT ALL AVAILABLE RESOURCES TO SUPPORTING
COORDINATED INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE
PARTNERSHIPS AIMED AT ADDRESSING THE ONGOING FENTANYL EPIDEMIC.**

I strongly support Senate Resolution No. 52, which urges the State and Counties to prioritize and direct all available resources to supporting coordinated interagency collaboration and public-private partnerships to address the ongoing fentanyl epidemic.

Across Hawai'i, every twenty-eight hours, someone dies from a drug overdose. Increasingly, these overdose deaths are being caused by opioids such as fentanyl. We consider this a public health emergency and are ringing the alarm.

This epidemic can be stopped by addressing the root causes of drug use, expanding access to treatment and harm reduction strategies, providing prevention through education, and reducing the supply of illicit opioids entering our islands – all are active initiatives of the Hawai'i Island Fentanyl Task Force. These initiatives are essential but insufficient if we don't activate our community's awareness.

Defeating the war on fentanyl will require collaboration and building coalitions beyond our island shores. We strongly urge you to pass Senate Resolution No. 52 to help our island communities beat this epidemic and save lives.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

Deborah Michiko Fried
Hilo, Hawaii

March 20, 2024

The Honorable Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
and Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

**IN SUPPORT OF SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 52 URGING THE STATE AND COUNTIES TO
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Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

Hannah Preston-Pita, Psy, D. Ed, D, CSAC
Hilo, Hawai'i Island

Micah K. Alameda

P.O. Box 11264
Hilo, Hawai'i 96721
micah@alamediahawaii.com

March 22, 2024

The Honorable Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
and Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

Hawai'i State Senate
Conference Room 225 & Videoconference
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

**RE: SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 52
URGING THE STATE AND COUNTIES TO PRIORITIZE AND DIRECT ALL
AVAILABLE RESOURCES TO SUPPORTING COORDINATED INTERAGENCY
COLLABORATION AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS AIMED AT
ADDRESSING THE ONGOING FENTANYL EPIDEMIC.**

Aloha e Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee,

I **strongly support** Senate Resolution No. 52, which urges the State and Counties to prioritize and direct all available resources to supporting coordinated interagency collaboration and public-private partnerships to address the ongoing fentanyl epidemic.

Across Hawai'i, every twenty-eight hours, someone dies from a drug overdose. Increasingly, these overdose deaths are being caused by opioids such as fentanyl. We consider this a public health emergency and are ringing the alarm.

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Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

Ke aloha nō,



Micah K. Alameda

March 21, 2024

The Honorable Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
and Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

IN SUPPORT OF SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 52 URGING THE STATE AND COUNTIES TO
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Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

Sally Ancheta, Chair, Prevention & Education Committee, Hawai'i Island Fentanyl Task Force
Hilo, HI

SR-52

Submitted on: 3/21/2024 8:15:47 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James Hustace	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this resolution.

SR-52

Submitted on: 3/21/2024 8:32:41 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kymmie Gentry Peck	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly supports Senate Resolution No. 52, which urges the State and Counties to prioritize and direct all available resources to supporting coordinated interagency collaboration and public-private partnerships to address the ongoing fentanyl epidemic.

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shores. We strongly urge you to pass Senate Resolution No. 52 to help our island communities beat this epidemic and save lives.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure

SR-52

Submitted on: 3/21/2024 9:04:21 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pualililehua Carriaga	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

March 21, 2024

The Honorable Joy San Buenaventura, Chair

and Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

IN SUPPORT OF SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 52 URGING THE STATE AND COUNTIES TO PRIORITIZE AND DIRECT ALL AVAILABLE RESOURCES TO SUPPORTING COORDINATED INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS AIMED AT ADDRESSING THE ONGOING FENTANYL EPIDEMIC.

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Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

Pualililehua Carriaga

Hawaii Island

SR-52

Submitted on: 3/21/2024 9:35:01 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Miranda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

March 21, 2024

The Honorable Joy San Buenaventura, Chair

and Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

IN SUPPORT OF SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 52 URGING THE STATE AND COUNTIES TO PRIORITIZE AND DIRECT ALL AVAILABLE RESOURCES TO SUPPORTING COORDINATED INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS AIMED AT ADDRESSING THE ONGOING FENTANYL EPIDEMIC.

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Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

Michael Miranda
Līhu'e, Hawai'i

SR-52

Submitted on: 3/21/2024 11:48:09 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tara Reed	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha members of the legislature, I stand before you today in strong support of making Narcan, a life-saving medication that reverses opioid overdoses, readily available throughout our state. Opioid overdoses are a devastating reality in Hawaii. According to the Department of Health, EVERY 11 MINUTES SOMEONE SOMEWHERE DIES OF AN OVERDOSE*. These deaths are preventable. Narcan can quickly reverse an overdose and give someone a second chance. We need to be clear: Narcan saves lives. It's not a solution to addiction, but it's a crucial tool in harm reduction. Harm reduction programs work. They meet people where they're at, provide support, and most importantly, help keep people alive. By making Narcan more accessible, we can equip our communities to respond to overdoses. This includes not just people who struggle with addiction, but also their loved ones, friends, and even bystanders. The wider Narcan is available, the more lives we can save. I urge you to support this legislation and make Narcan readily available throughout Hawaii. Let's send a message that we value life and will do everything we can to prevent these tragic deaths. Mahalo.

March 22, 2024

The Honorable Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
and Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

**IN SUPPORT OF SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 52 URGING THE STATE AND COUNTIES TO
PRIORITIZE AND DIRECT ALL AVAILABLE RESOURCES TO SUPPORTING
COORDINATED INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE
PARTNERSHIPS AIMED AT ADDRESSING THE ONGOING FENTANYL EPIDEMIC.**

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Defeating the war on fentanyl will require collaboration and building coalitions beyond our island shores. We strongly urge you to pass Senate Resolution No. 52 to help our island communities beat this epidemic and save lives.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

Wally Lau
Co-Lead, Hawai'i Island Fentanyl Task Force

Testimony of

Kevin Kunz, MD, MPH
Addiction Medicine Specialist
Hilo, Hawaii

The Honorable Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
And Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

Before the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services, Friday, March 22, 2024, 1:00 PM

In support of:

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 64 URGING THE STATE AND COUNTIES TO PRIORITIZE AND DIRECT ALL AVAILABLE RESOURCES TO SUPPORTING COORDINATED INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS AIMED AT ADDRESSING THE ONGOING FENTANYL EPIDEMIC.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Resolution 52

As the unprecedented public health emergency of drug overdose deaths escalates in Hawaii, the silence and absence of effective action by all sectors is astounding, and most sadly it has been deadly. How was the loud and clear message from the fentanyl overdose death crisis on the continent ignored—did anyone really believe Hawaii would be immune? That this raging forest fire of fentanyl would stop when it reached the Pacific? How was it that as early as 2017, when there was clear evidence that fentanyl had arrived here, and as the scorched the earth elsewhere burned, we acted as though we would be immune? Or as so often happens with unhealthy substance use and addictive diseases, did the potential stakeholders and problem solvers at multiple levels just look the other way, hoping someone else would take care of this? After 30 years of working on the Big Island as a physician specializing in addiction medicine, the current fentanyl crisis has taught me this: unless our entire community rises up and screams “we have had enough”, Hawaii will soon hold equal status nationally, as fentanyl will be the leading cause of death for our Islanders as well.

Another lesson learned in our State and our Nation’s 40-plus years of addressing drug addiction: almost all current actions we take against illicit drugs and addressing addictive disease are essential to save lives, yet insufficient to stop our ever growing epidemic and skyrocketing death rates. Interdiction of illicit drugs by Law Enforcement saves lives, yet it has not changed the course of our rising drug problem. It is and has been insufficient to stop the exponential rise in drug overdoses and deaths. Treatment of those with substance use disorders saves lives. Yet less than 25% of those needing treatment for addiction receive it, and of those that do, 50-80% return to drug use within a year. It is essential and

saves lives, yet insufficient to curb the epidemic. Harm Reduction interventions like Narcan to treat overdoses saves lives. More is needed, it is essential yet it is and will be insufficient to attenuate the fentanyl epidemic. Drug overdose deaths have risen exponentially for over 40 years. The drugs may change, the demographics may change, yet the statistics have only gotten worse. Every single year. Prevention and education at every level is essential –it can save lives. Yet implementation in school curricula and other interventions come late, are delegated away to “outside” sectors (i.e. education, health departments, government).

What is missing and what can we do? I will get there, yet first things first. I assume here that others have brought forth to you the facts about fentanyl, and the other new drugs (like xylazine and nitizines) that have entered America and Hawaii’s illicit drug supply. And that fentanyl is cheap to make, easy to transport and just 2 mg can kill a naïve user. And that fentanyl is now laced into virtually all other substances, including cannabis and counterfeit pills of every sort. Here on the Big Island, we have lost teenagers who died of unintentional fentanyl poisoning as they smoked a cannabis joint, or used another substance, not realizing it was laced with fentanyl. One group, the Hawaii Island Fentanyl Task Force was founded after the death of a 14 year old girl in November of 2021 from an unintentional fentanyl poisoning as she experimented with another substance. That community stood up, saying “enough is enough”. That is what we all must do statewide. So you know how deadly these substances are. And I assume that you already know that there is an average of one drug overdose death in our State every 28 hours, and that at the last publically available Department of Health count - a few years ago – about a third of all of Hawaii’s overdose deaths were caused by opioids, and the majority of these were fentanyl. And that this has progressively gotten worse. I have embedded below the latest CDC drug overdose death statistics, that are the most current available, through June of 2023.

So what can we do? Everything we have been doing for the last 4 decades has saved lives yet has been insufficient to quell the ever growing overdose death epidemic, the fentanyl crisis and the unfettered fentanyl overdoses and deaths. What can we do? What can we do?

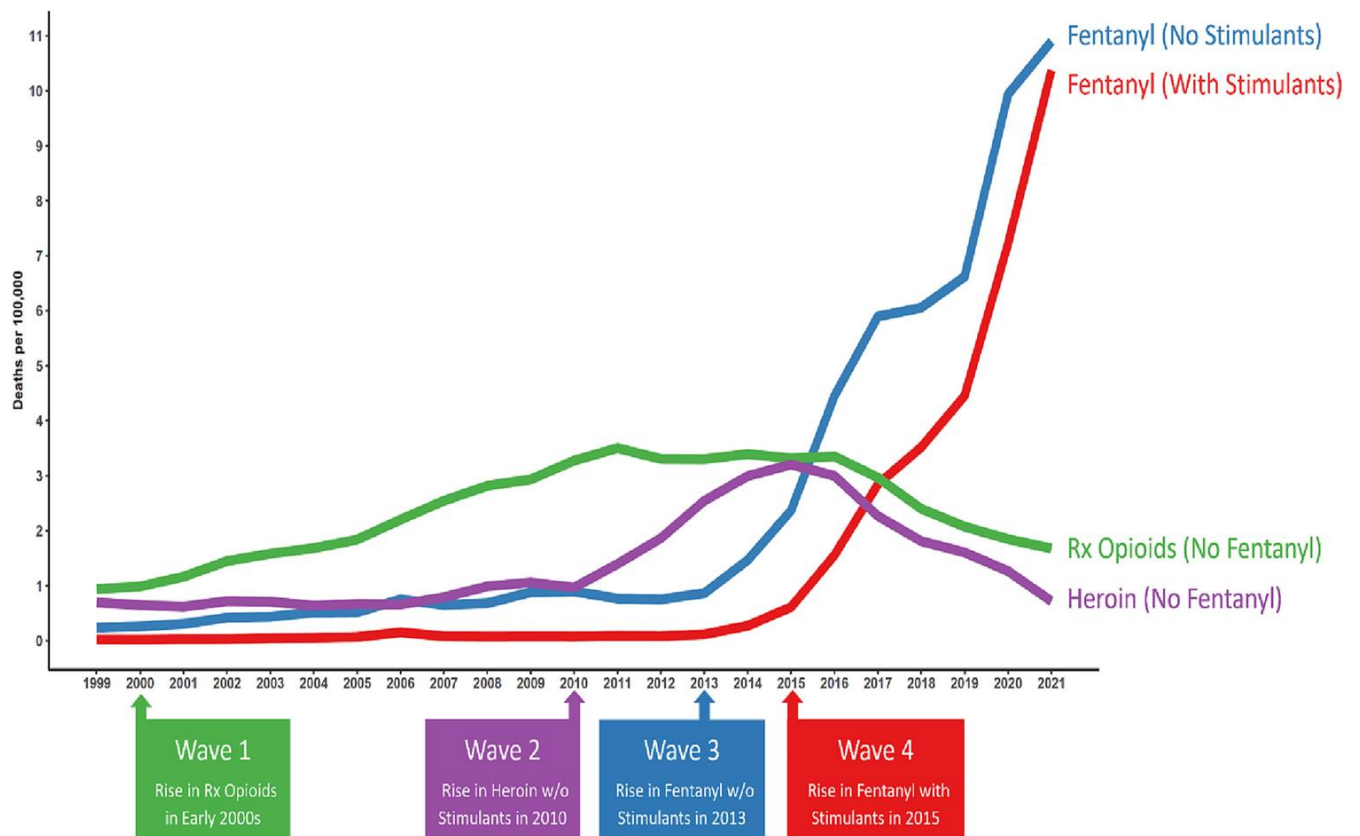
Who are you? Who are we? You may identify as a county or state leader or employee, or as a health system or agency employee or leader, or as the average hard working citizen who cares about your family, your work, and your community, and so forth and so on. Perhaps you have been in some way essential in saving lives –and thank you for that! - yet the record shows you have not touched the epidemic, it has raged despite all you have done. What you have done and are doing is essential, it is saving lives. Keep doing it. Yet it will not subdue this epidemic. Keep collaborating with your peers across all stakeholder groups. Never give up. Yet these things alone will not stop the epidemic. We have a 40 year experiment that proves this. You are saving lives as the epidemic of drug destruction and death grows.

Now, who are we? Who are we and what can we do? If for 40 plus years all the many significant efforts have not reduced overdoses and overdose deaths have continued to rise, what can we do? What can we do if all the important and significant efforts of every sector I’ve mentioned have saved lives yet have not reduced, nor stabilized, nor halted the overdoses, then what can we do? What can the mothers do who have lost a child? What can the family do that has lost a member to overdose? What

can any of us do that have seen our family, our friends, or neighbors negatively impacted by addiction or overdose? What can we do?

We the people can rise up together. We can work not just as ordinary citizens, employees or professionals, yet join together as an Ohana that will not stand for this slaughter. And it is a slaughter. Would we tolerate any other killer of this magnitude. Would a rogue virus killing as swiftly as fentanyl be ignored? Would a serial killer taking one of our community out every 28 hours be tolerated? We the people can stand up and say loudly together: ENOUGH! We, all of us, must spread awareness and know that at the end of the day, we are together, and in a loud voice demand that we be heard. Rallies. Sign waving. Public led educational pop-ups, community and county volunteer task forces. Demonstrations. Picketing! Speaking with each other. Gaining strength in numbers. Don't wait for government to solve this – they have not and cannot. Don't wait for health systems, law enforcement and harm reduction experts to solve this – they have not and cannot. We the people – this is our last gasp chance.

In closing let me summarize. The efforts of all sectors - health care, law enforcement, government agencies, addiction treatment programs, non-profits, and others - are saving lives every day, yet they have not, are not and cannot stop this epidemic. We can. We must. Please, stand up. Make noise. Join together. Join in the campaign to save our children, or families, our communities. Spread the word.



Charting the fourth wave: demographic trends in polysubstance fentanyl overdose deaths in the United States, 2010–2021 J. Friedman, C. L. Shover *Addiction*. Volume 118, Issue 12 December 2023 Pages 2477–2485

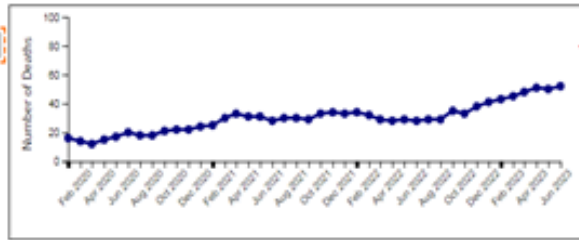
HAWAII COUNTY

Provisional Drug Overdose Deaths by County, 12 month period ending June, 2023

Based on data available for analysis on: January 07, 2024

Select State **Hawaii** Figure 1. 12 Month-ending Provisional Counts of Drug Overdose Deaths for Hawaii County, Hawaii

Select County **Hawaii**



**52 OD deaths in 12 months
Avg: 1 every 7 days**



The provisional drug overdose death count for the 12 month-ending period ending in June, 2023 for Hawaii County, Hawaii is: 52.

CDC Provisional County Overdose Deaths

<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsrr/provcounty-drug-overdose.htm>

COUNTY	OD Deaths 12 months ending June 2023	Population (rounded)	Frequency of OD Deaths (average)
Honolulu	205	1,000,000	1 every 2 days
Hawaii	52	200,000	1 every 7 days
Maui	52	165,000	1 every 7 days
Kauai	11	73,000	1 every 33 days
State of Hawaii	320	1,440,000	1 every 28 hours

Summarized from: CDC Provisional County Overdose Deaths
<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsrr/provcounty-drug-overdose.htm>

SR-52

Submitted on: 3/21/2024 2:43:45 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cyd L. Hoffeld	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Honorable Joy San Buenaventura, Chair and Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services:

IN SUPPORT OF SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 52 URGING THE STATE AND COUNTIES TO PRIORITIZE AND DIRECT ALL AVAILABLE RESOURCES TO SUPPORTING COORDINATED INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS AIMED AT ADDRESSING THE ONGOING FENTANYL EPIDEMIC.

I strongly support Senate Resolution No. 52, which urges the State and Counties to prioritize and direct all available resources to supporting coordinated interagency collaboration and public-private partnerships to address the ongoing fentanyl epidemic.

Across Hawai‘i, every twenty-eight hours, someone dies from a drug overdose. Increasingly, these overdose deaths are being caused by opioids such as fentanyl. We consider this a public health emergency and are ringing the alarm.

This epidemic can be stopped by addressing the root causes of drug use, expanding access to treatment and harm reduction strategies, providing prevention through education, and reducing the supply of illicit opioids entering our islands – all are active initiatives of the Hawai‘i Island Fentanyl Task Force. These initiatives are essential but insufficient if we don’t activate our community’s awareness.

Defeating the war on fentanyl will require collaboration and building coalitions beyond our island shores. We strongly urge you to pass Senate Resolution No. 52 to help our island communities beat this epidemic and save lives.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

Cyd L. Hoffeld

Kalapana, Hawai‘i County