

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII  
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII



DEPT. COMM. 100-248  
KENNETH S. FINK, M.D., M.P.H., M.G.A.  
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH  
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO  
P. O. BOX 3378  
HONOLULU, HI 96801-3378

In reply, please refer to:  
File:

December 26, 2024

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi,  
President and Members of the Senate  
Thirty-third State Legislature  
State Capitol, Room 409  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

The Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura,  
Speaker  
and Members of the House of  
Representatives  
Thirty-third State Legislature  
State Capitol, Room 431  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear President Kouchi, Speaker Nakamura, and Members of the Legislature:

For your information and consideration, I am transmitting a copy of the Annual Report on Dental Health Activities, Expenditures, and Recommendations, pursuant to Section 321-63, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

In accordance with Section 93-16, Hawaii Revised Statutes, I am also informing you that the report may be viewed electronically at:

<https://health.hawaii.gov/opppd/departments-of-health-reports-to-2025-legislature/>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ken Fink".

Kenneth S. Fink, M.D., M.P.H., M.G.A.  
Director of Health

Enclosures

c: Legislative Reference Bureau  
Hawaii State Library System (2)  
Hamilton Library

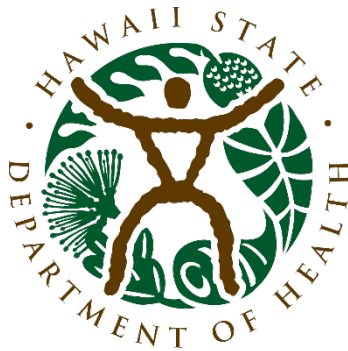
**REPORT TO THE THIRTY- THIRD LEGISLATURE**

**STATE OF HAWAI'I**

**2025**

**PURSUANT TO SECTION 321-63  
HAWAI'I REVISED STATUTES**

**REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
TO SUBMIT AN ANNUAL REPORT ON DENTAL HEALTH  
ACTIVITIES, EXPENDITURES, AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS**



**PREPARED BY:**

**STATE OF HAWAI'I  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

**December 2024**

**2024 ANNUAL REPORT**

**DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES DIVISION**  
**HOSPITAL & COMMUNITY DENTAL SERVICES BRANCH**

**Executive Summary:**

The Hospital & Community Dental Services Branch (HCDSB) is the only state-operated public health program in Hawai'i that provides direct dental treatment services for the community. The HCDSB primarily serves individuals with disabilities and other special needs who have limited or no access to private sector dental care. The HCDSB is part of the Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH), Developmental Disabilities Division (DDD).

In compliance with HRS §321-63(5), the DOH submits an annual report to the legislature detailing dental activities, plans, measures, expenditures, and recommendations.

**Program Objective:**

The HCDSB offers comprehensive safety-net dental care services to vulnerable and underserved populations in Hawai'i who have little to no access to dental treatment. The clinics primarily serve adult Medicaid participants who are classified as aged, blind, or disabled, as well as those with severe chronic mental illness, elderly individuals who are medically fragile, and persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). Without HCDSB services, these populations would otherwise be unable to receive dental care through private dental providers or community health centers.

**Program Activities:**

**Direct Dental Services**

Dental services are provided by HCDSB personnel to patients residing at state institutions, such as the Hawai'i State Hospital, Lē'ahi Hospital, and Kalaupapa Settlement, and to patients living in the community. The HCDSB operates five dental clinics on O'ahu, located at the DOH's health centers: Diamond Head, Lanakila, Leeward, Windward, and the Hawai'i State Hospital. Currently, there are no HCDSB dental clinics on the neighbor islands.

In fiscal year 2024, the HCDSB provided clinical services to 1,062 individuals and completed a total of 11,457 dental procedures. The patients served by HCDSB clinics included:

36%	Persons with a mental health condition
52%	Persons with an intellectual/developmental disability
19%	Persons aged 65 years and older
17%	Hawai'i State Hospital patients

## Community Collaboration

### Legislation

During the 2024 Legislative Session, the HCDSB and the Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition collaborated to draft, advocate for, and facilitate the introduction of Senate Bill 2476.

The bill aimed to streamline the dental sealant process by allowing dental hygienists to perform dental sealant screenings in school-based oral health programs without the need for an examination or treatment plan by a dentist. This change significantly reduces the labor costs associated with having a dentist perform these screenings and removes a costly barrier, helping to promote, develop, and sustain school-based oral health programs in Hawai'i. The bill applies only to school-based programs, such as dental sealant initiatives, Virtual Dental Home (VDH) programs, and dental services embedded within school facilities. It does not extend to private dental offices or community dental clinics.

The bill was signed into law as Act 097 in June 2024.

### Community Activities

The HCDSB has collaborated with various state, nonprofit, and educational institutions to improve access to dental care and address oral health disparities in Hawai'i. This effort involved coordinating programs aimed at enhancing the community dental infrastructure, including initiatives like the VDH, dental sealant, and outreach programs to improve oral health education.

The HCDSB collaborated with various programs including, but not limited to:

- Queen's Medical Center, Dental Clinic and General Practice Dental Residency Program;
- University of Hawai'i, School of Nursing & Dental Hygiene at Mānoa;
- Kapi'olani Community College, Dental Assisting Program;
- Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition;
- Hawai'i Dental Service Foundation;
- Dental Lifeline Network;
- Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Programs;
- Head Start Programs; and
- Na Lei Wili AHEC.

### Teledentistry (Virtual Dental Home) Pilot Project

The Kaua'i VDH pilot project has been extended for a third year. This initiative continues to provide dental care and education to children ages 0 to 5 years at community sites, such as Head Start and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) programs throughout Kaua'i. Pediatric dentists Dr. Kanoe Baird and Dr. Patricia Sanchez are collaborating on this community dental outreach project. The program aims to evaluate the sustainability and feasibility of integrating a VDH program into a private dental practice in Hawai'i. This pilot project is being funded via a Hawai'i Dental Service Foundation grant.

## Oral Health Trainings

In the 2024 fiscal year, the HCDSB utilized both in-person and virtual platforms to deliver oral health education and awareness presentations and trainings. These sessions included a combination of didactic instruction and hands-on (in-person) training and were updated to incorporate the latest oral health research and evidence-based practices. Approximately 845 individuals participated in the HCDSB's oral health trainings and presentations.

This year's presentations were conducted in collaboration with the following organizations:

- University of Hawai'i, Mānoa
  - School of Nursing & Dental Hygiene
  - John A. Burns, School of Medicine
    - Speech Language Pathologists
    - Interprofessional Education Seminar Panel
- University of Hawai'i, Maui College
  - School of Dental Hygiene
- Kapi'olani Community College
  - Dental Assisting Program
  - Nursing Program
- Hawai'i Self-Advocacy Advisory Council (SAAC)
- Nursing Homes (Collaboration with Hawai'i Dental Foundation through Kupuna Smiles Program)
  - Care Mānoa
  - Hale Mohalu
  - Island Rehabilitation and Nursing Home
  - Kalaupapa Home Care Center
  - Maluhia
  - O'ahu Care Facility
  - Pu'uwai 'O Makaha
  - Kaua'i Wilcox Nursing Home
- Other Organizations
  - Community Health Worker Association
  - Lanakila Multi-Purpose Senior Center
  - Special Olympics Hawai'i
  - Waipahu High School/Academy of Health & Sciences

### **Concerns and Issues Encountered by the Program:**

Oral health disparities remain a significant health concern for Hawai'i residents. Medicaid recipients, low-income individuals, and medically compromised patients face limited access to dental care from private dental providers and even community dental clinics. Many patients are referred to the HCDSB by state public health and social service agencies and private healthcare providers for dental treatment. However, the HCDSB currently does not operate dental clinics

on the neighbor islands, where access to essential emergency dental care, such as for pain relief and infection, is limited. The capacity of the state's community health center dental clinics is also restricted, particularly for individuals with I/DD, who struggle to access care at these facilities.

The HCDSB also faces ongoing challenges in filling vacancies due to a shortage of oral health auxiliary staff. The dental assistant shortage in Hawai'i, coupled with a highly competitive job market, has directly impacted clinic operations, reducing capacity to treat patients. To address this, the HCDSB has been leveraging community networks and personal contacts to recruit dental assistants for these vacant positions.

**Program Recommendations:**

The HCDSB will continue providing dental treatment while collaborating with private sector providers, community health centers, and other oral health stakeholders to raise awareness of the challenges faced by uninsured and underinsured populations in accessing dental care. Additionally, the HCDSB will evaluate oral healthcare models implemented in other states to explore potential solutions for access-to-care challenges in Hawai'i. Advocacy efforts will also continue to support those who are in need of dental care and currently lack access to these essential services.

**Total HCDSB Budget for FY2024:**

**Position Count:** 12.00 FTE

**Personnel Services:** \$ 1,037,832

**Other Current Expenses:** \$312,075

(\$312,075 includes the \$200,000 for Queen's Medical Center contract)

**Total** \$1,349,907

## **FAMILY HEALTH SERVICES DIVISION 2024**

The Hawai'i State Department of Health, Family Health Services Division is responsible for carrying out the activities and performing the functions provided in Hawai'i Revised Statutes Title 19, Chapter 321, Part V §321-61 to §321-63. Key dental health program activities funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Oral Health Disease Prevention five-year grant (2013-2018) ended on August 31, 2018.

### **Ongoing Oral Health Assurance Activities of Other FHSD Programs/Partnerships:**

- Contract with 16 health service programs (including the Federally Qualified Health Centers) to provide primary care services for the uninsured and underinsured that includes dental treatment services (Office of Primary Care and Rural Health)
- Monitor workforce shortages (including dental services) and establish federal designations for health professional shortage areas (Office of Primary Care and Rural Health)
- The DOH Family Health Services Division, in partnership with the Hawai'i Health Data Warehouse, developed the Oral Health Data Tracker (2023). This convenient online tool allows users to review data across 30 oral health indicators for children, pregnant women, and adults.  
(<https://www.hawaiihealthmatters.org/indicators/index/dashboard?alias=OralHealth>)
- The DOH Family Health Services Division, in partnership with the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Nancy Atmospera-Walch School of Nursing, Department of Dental Hygiene, the Hawai'i State Department of Education, and the Hawai'i State Public Charter School Commission, provided oral health assessments and dental sealant in Hawai'i public and charter schools (\$99,560.00). See attached Hawai'i Keiki report (dated 11/2/24) for project description and dental sealant outcomes from Fall 2019 to Spring 2024 school years.
- The DOH Family Health Services Division, in partnership with the Hawai'i Public Health Institute and the Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition, expanded oral health coalition activities to improve the oral health status of Hawai'i residents. These activities included a community oral health needs assessment and training and professional development opportunities to increase the capacity of coalition leadership and members (\$98,735.00).

**Position Count:** 0 FTE

**Total:** \$198,295.00

**Means of Funding:** State General Funds

November 2, 2024

## **Hawaii Keiki Oral Health Program Report**

### *Hawaii Keiki Healthy and Ready to Learn Program*

In 2014, UH Manoa Nursing partnered with the Hawaii Department of Education (HIDOE) to create the Hawaii Keiki (HK): Healthy & Ready to Learn Program. In its early years, the program had 5 school nurses at 5 HIDOE schools on 3 islands. The program continued to grow and provided school nurses statewide to all 15 HIDOE Complex Areas on all islands. In 2024, the program is celebrating 10 years of partnership with HIDOE and now has more than 170 healthcare providers that serve all 258 HIDOE public schools. The HK Program began its partnership with the Hawaii Public Charter Schools in the school year 2022-2023 and currently serves 9 schools and 22 campuses. The Hawaii Keiki: Healthy & Ready to Learn program's overall mission is to keep keiki healthy and ready to learn by providing access to school nursing services in Hawaii's public schools.

### *Hawaii Keiki Oral Health Program*

The Hawaii Keiki Oral Health Program was started in 2019 based on identified needs in the state as highlighted in the Department of Health Statewide Surveillance survey of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade children, with 71% of the third graders having experienced tooth decay of some kind, 22% had untreated tooth decay, and 7% needed urgent dental care. The oral health program within Hawaii Keiki was developed to provide additional services related to oral health screening, sealant, education as well as coordination of services between community stakeholders and the schools to improve access and improve oral health outcomes. The Hawaii Keiki-Hawaii Dental Service (HDS) Dental Sealant Program was developed in 2018 and launched as a pilot in 2019 through funding from the HDS Foundation in partnership with UH School of Nursing and the Hawaii Department of Education. The program focuses on providing oral health assessments and dental sealants at no-cost and brings licensed dentists and dental hygienists to the school to minimize student's time away from class. Families of participating students receive assessment reports, referrals and oral care kits, and students who need urgent dental care receive referrals to community dental service providers. The pilot project in the 2018-2019 school year reached a total of 6 schools on the island of Oahu and has continued to grow over the past 5 years reaching 77 schools in the past school year. The HK-HDS Dental Sealant Program has been continuously funded by the HDS Foundation, with in-kind support from the UH School and Nursing. In 2023, the Department of Health Family Health Services Division provided funding for program supplies to reach more islands, schools and keiki.

### *HK-HDS Sealant Program Outcomes*

Since the pilot program launched in 2019 and despite a slight pause and reduction of services during the pandemic, the program has made significant and continuous progress reaching close to 5,000 keiki for screenings across 4 islands with 62% of those keiki needing and receiving sealants. In addition, 160 keiki were identified to have urgent dental needs and were referred successfully to care in the community. This not only helps reduce emergency room visit costs but also and most importantly eliminates the pain and suffering experienced by our keiki when they have significant and possibly deadly dental infections/chronic conditions.



November 2, 2024

## HK-HDS Sealant Outcome: Fall 2019 - Spring 2024

	<i>2019-2020</i>	<i>2020-2021</i>	<i>2021-2022</i>	<i>2022-2023</i>	<i>2023- 2024</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
<i>Schools</i>	6	14	20	68	77	<b>185</b>
<i>Screened</i>	106	193	653	2007	1910	<b>4869</b>
<i>Needed Sealants</i>	51	123	430	1219	1209	<b>3032</b>
<i>Teeth Sealed</i>	172	406	1459	4593	3992	<b>10,622</b>
<i>Urgent</i>	6	5	28	65	56	<b>160</b>
<i>Screened &amp; Got Sealants</i>	48%	64%	65%	61%	63%	<b>62%</b>

During the past school year (2023-2024) the HK-HDS dental sealant program continued to focus on quality care while also expanding our services to reach more students in schools. In doing so, the program successfully reached students on four islands with the most recent launch to Hawaii Island in 2024. By maintaining the current relationships with the HIDOE schools and community stakeholders we have been able to also identify those few remaining HIDOE Title 1 schools and new Charter schools that would benefit from these services. This includes those elementary schools on Molokai who we are planning to provide services to in April 2024.

### *Hawaii Keiki Dental Team*

The Hawaii Keiki Program currently has a dental team that is primarily on a per diem basis with one full-time dental hygienist that serves as the oral health program manager and one dental sealant director who is also the Hawaii Keiki School-based Health Program Director and is a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner, University of Hawaii Nursing Professor and content expert in oral health for Hawaii and nationally. Our per diem dental staff from each island include Oahu (4 dentists, 5 hygienists), Maui (2 dentists, 1 hygienist, 2 dental assistants), Kauai (3 dentists, 3 hygienists) and on Hawaii Island (2 dentists, currently hiring hygienists).

The interprofessional team consisting of nurses, health technicians, dental hygienists, dentists along with UH dental hygiene students have focused on oral health education to students during our school visits. In addition, critical oral health education is provided by our HK nurses in their clinics and at community/school events to reach both keiki and their families. Each Hawaii Keiki nurse is provided with oral health supplies and educational material to distribute to students in need as well as a referral form that can be given to parents of students on Medicaid needing to access a dental home. Additionally, in this past school year oral education was provided at 7 community/school events which included:

November 2, 2024

8/31/23 - Honowai ES - OH presentation to kindergarten classes

9/6/23 - Kahuku Raiders Market

10/1/23 - Children and Youth Day event

10/28/23 - Iliahi ES Fall Fair

2/22/24 - Waiau ES Career Day presentation event

3/2/24 - Papakolea Ohana Health Fair event

4/20/24 - Keiki Rainbow Run event

During the school year 2023-2024 the program reached and screened 1910 students in 77 schools. Of those 1910 students screened, 63% received sealants, 3992 teeth were sealed and 56 keiki were identified as having urgent dental needs. In addition, for those 150 students screened in the 4 new Hawaii Island schools, 75% of the students needed and received sealants and 5 had urgent dental needs identified and immediately referred successfully for dental services in the community. A follow-up retention check was done on 10% of students from the schools in the previous year for a total of 207 students. Results showed a 42% retention rate with 127 students receiving reapplication.

### *Community Partners*

Since the beginning of the program, we have seen growth in the number of schools participating in the program and an increase in students participating in the program (parent consent rates). Our successful partnership contracting services with the dental team at Hui No Ke Ola Pono has allowed us to reach all elementary schools on Maui. Despite the devastating fires in fall of 2024, all elementary schools were reached for oral health assessments and sealants, if needed, in the spring semester of 2024. The Hawaii Keiki program is currently completing the final paperwork to partner with the Hamakua Health Center on Hawaii Island in a similar arrangement. Their dental team will assist us in reaching more of the Hawaii Island Schools in the upcoming school year.

### *Summary*

The Hawaii Keiki Oral Health Program has made significant progress and has improved access to care for many of our keiki through its dental sealant programs. Through this on-site program, the keiki are able to receive these important preventative services, oral hygiene education, mentoring/care from our dental and nursing teams as well as an appropriate referring of these keiki to their dental home for ongoing care. Applying sealants on molars, which is where 80% of caries occur, is simple and very cost effective; thereby reducing State Medicaid costs related to expensive restorative care that is needed when and if caries occur. The funding from our partners including HDS, DOH and UH School of Nursing (in-kind) is greatly appreciated and with additional funding we will not only be able to reach additional schools on our neighbor islands, but also can provide additional services to keiki in schools such as screening for kindergarteners, sealant for older keiki, etc.

### Reference:

1. State of Hawaii Family Health Services Division, State of Hawaii Oral Health Program. Hawaii Smiles 2015: The Oral Health of Hawaii's Children. Published online 2015. Accessed July 20, 2023. <https://health.hawaii.gov/about/files/2013/06/Hawaii-Smiles-Report.pdf>

## Hawaii Keiki – HDS Dental Sealant Program SY 24-25



Date	School Name (2 <sup>nd</sup> grade unless otherwise noted)	Total Keiki in Grade	% Consented	Keiki Screened	Need Sealants	Teeth Sealed	Urgent Need
9/17	Oahu - Honowai EL	70	34	24	10	30	0
9/20	Oahu - Pauoa EL	65	51	33	23	73	1
9/24	Oahu - Pearl City EL	44	47	21	12	35	1
9/27	Oahu - Lincoln EL	51	53	27	22	70	0
9/27	Kauai - Wilcox EL	2 <sup>nd</sup> gr - 115 3 <sup>rd</sup> gr - 125	20	49	26	85	2
10/1	Oahu - Kaahumanu EL	76	42	32	22	66	2
10/1	Maui - Pomaikai EL	86	35	30	16	61	0
10/4	Oahu - Hokulani EL	34	53	18	9	27	0
10/4	Kauai - Kekaha EL	2 <sup>nd</sup> gr - 48 3 <sup>rd</sup> gr - 58	25	26	12	38	2
10/15	Oahu - Kuhio EL	30	77	23	17	54	0
10/15	Maui - Kahului EL	135	20	27	21	81	0
10/18	Oahu - Solomon EL	111	24	27	20	67	0
10/22	Oahu - Iliahi EL	58	36	21	13	43	3
10/25	Oahu - Lanakila EL	58	60	35	29	86	7
10/29	Oahu - Anuenue School	2 <sup>nd</sup> gr - 45 3 <sup>rd</sup> gr - 31	26	20	8	18	2
10/29	Maui - Paia EL	72	32	23	11	41	1
11/1	Oahu - Lehua EL	33	24	8	7	20	0
11/7	Maui - Kamalii EL	58	31	18	8	31	1
11/8	Oahu - Laie EL	86	38	33	29	102	0
11/8	Kauai - Kapaa EL	2 <sup>nd</sup> gr -130 3 <sup>rd</sup> gr -144	10	28	8	28	4
11/14	Maui - Wailuku EL	84	32	27	10	35	1
11/15	Oahu - Palolo EL	39	46	18	11	34	4
11/19	Oahu - Kahuku EL	28	42	20	14	52	2
11/21	Maui - Makawao EL	76	29	22	10	33	2
11/22	Oahu - Sunset Beach EL	49	20	10	10	39	0
11/22	Kauai - Kalaheo EL	2 <sup>nd</sup> gr - 51 3 <sup>rd</sup> gr - 56	14	15	8	24	0
11/16	Oahu - Royal EL	57	56	32	19	61	6
11/26	Maui - Lihikai EL	101	31	31	16	52	1
12/3	Oahu-Hauula EL	2 <sup>nd</sup> gr-53 3 <sup>rd</sup> gr-55	28	30	20	69	2
12/3	Maui - Kula EL	55	27	15	8	26	0
12/6	Oahu-Ewa EL	22	25	56	37	121	2
12/10	Oahu-Pohakea EL	65	43	28	19	59	3
12/12	Maui-Kihei EL	129	29	37	20	72	3

12/13	Oahu-Kaala EL	59	27	16	9	28	2
12/13	Kauai-Koloa EL	2 <sup>nd</sup> gr-48 3 <sup>rd</sup> gr-60	25	27	17	60	2
12/17	Maui-Waihee EL	81	44	36	13	50	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>36 schools</b>			<b>943</b>	<b>564</b>	<b>1872</b>	<b>59</b>

\*60% of students screened received sealants

\*Color Key: Oahu, Kauai, Maui