

Communities Putting Prevention to Work



KAUAI, HAWAII
Obesity Prevention

Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) is an initiative designed to make healthy living easier by promoting environmental changes at the local level. Through funding awarded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 2010, a total of 50 communities are working to prevent obesity and tobacco use—the two leading preventable causes of death and disability.

“IT IS COMMON KNOWLEDGE THAT SEDENTARY LIFESTYLES COMBINED WITH JUNK FOOD RESULT IN OVERWEIGHT AND OBESE CONDITIONS, IMPAIRING OUR WELLNESS AT GREAT COST. THROUGH COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS, WE ARE IMPLEMENTING PRACTICAL CHANGES THAT MAKE IT EASIER FOR EVERYONE TO INCREASE THEIR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND ESTABLISH BETTER EATING HABITS.”

— Daynette “Dee” Morikawa, State Representative and Chair, Hawaii State Leadership Team

Community Overview

Kauai, Hawaii, is tackling obesity throughout the community. Access to healthy food and health care can be a challenge for Kauai’s 67,091 residents. Approximately 17% of Kauai County ZIP codes do not have grocery stores or farmers’ markets where residents can purchase healthy food. When available, healthy food tends to be sold at high prices. Additionally, Kauai is designated as a mental health and primary care Health Professional Shortage Area, which suggests that residents with obesity-related diseases may not have access to the care they need.



While 23.7% of adults in Kauai County are overweight or obese, data suggest that nearly 50% of all Native Hawaiians are obese. The percentage of overweight or obese children aged 10-17 in Hawaii has been growing and is currently 28.5%. In addition to obesity-prevention efforts aimed at Kauai’s entire population, certain initiatives target Native Hawaiians, a segment of the population that represents almost 10% of Kauai’s total citizenry.

Community Successes

If healthy options are not available, then healthy living is not possible. With the support of the CPPW initiative, Kauai has implemented a variety of changes throughout the community to make healthy living easier.

To decrease the prevalence of obesity, Kauai:

- Secured the expansion of and promoted an 18-mile bike and walking path along the coast, increasing residents’ access to physical activity. The path was promoted at the 2011 annual Mayor-athon, an event to celebrate active lifestyles through walking, running, and biking. The event gained significant media coverage and attracted 830 participants.
- Expanded Park and Ride bus locations to provide the island’s 67,091 residents and more than 1 million visitors each year with greater public transportation options, which can increase physical activity levels. As part of this effort, a six-month pilot program was established that enables all Kauai Community College students to ride the Kauai bus at no cost.





“I HAD FUN RIDING BIKES ...
I LEARNED HOW TO MAKE
HAND SIGNALS. IT IS
IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT
IS SAFE.”

— *Kauai resident and
participant in Bike Safety
Training for Kauai’s Summer
Fun program*

Community Successes *(continued)*

- Launched the *Take the LEAP Hawaii* public awareness initiative to discourage the consumption of sugary beverages by conveying the negative health effects of sugar-sweetened drinks. Since May 2011, television and radio advertisements have reached more than half a million community members. The community also launched www.taketheleaphawaii.org to promote the initiative.
- Implemented the farm-to-preschool program in 19 preschools serving 551 students. The program is designed to positively influence early childhood eating habits and bring fresh local foods to a range of childcare centers and preschools in Kauai.
- Supported the implementation and promotion of the Mayor’s Walking Workbus project, in which the mayor invites residents to join him in weekly two-mile walks through downtown Lihue to encourage physical activity.
- Trained nearly 250 youth and adults in bicycle safety skills to encourage safe active transportation.
- Enabled the use of Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) at select farmers’ markets to make fresh produce more accessible to low-income residents.



(The list above is a sample of all activities completed by the community.)

Warning Lights Will Make Walking a Safer Transportation Option for Students

Kauai is working to ensure the safety of students who walk to Kōloa Elementary School. As part of this effort, Kauai County is installing a special warning light that alerts motorists of the presence of pedestrians at crosswalks by flashing a light pattern to capture and hold a driver’s attention. By ensuring pedestrians’ safety, the county aims to encourage active transportation among the 250 Kōloa Elementary School students and nearly 2,000 Kōloa residents.

Leadership Team

The leadership team includes high-level community leaders from multiple sectors, who have the combined resources and capacity to make healthy living easier. Members of Kauai’s leadership team are key agents for change in their community. The leadership team includes representatives from the following organizations:

- Mayor’s Office, County of Maui
- Agency for Elderly Affairs, Kauai County
- Hawaii State Department of Education, Kauai County
- Hawaii State Department of Health
- Hawaii State Legislature
- Kauai and Maui County Councils
- Kauai Community College
- Kauai Path
- Malama Kauai
- Wilcox Health System

Additional Information

For more information, please visit www.taketheleaphawaii.org.