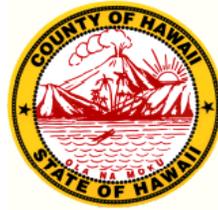


Mitchell D. Roth
Mayor



Lee E. Lord
Managing Director

Robert H. Command
Deputy Managing Director

County of Hawai'i Office of the Mayor

25 Aupuni Street, Suite 2603 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720 • (808) 961-8211 • Fax (808) 961-6553
KONA: 74-5044 Ane Keohokalole Hwy., Bldg C • Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740
(808) 323-4444 • Fax (808) 323-4440

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 27, 2022

Contact: Cyrus Johnasen
Mobile: (808) 345-9434
Email: cyrus.johnasen@hawaiicounty.gov

PARTNERSHIP WORKS TO ADDRESS DRUG ADDICTION AND FENTANYL DEATHS

The County of Hawai'i, Bay Clinic, and West Hawai'i Community Health Center have formed the Hawai'i Island Fentanyl Task Force to address growing Fentanyl overdoses on Hawai'i Island. Fentanyl is a powerful synthetic opioid similar to morphine but is 50 to 100 times more potent. The dangerous drug is mixed into fake pain pills and other drugs, such as Xanax, without the users' knowledge. A tiny amount can be fatal.

The task force is led by Dr. Kimo Alameda and is working to bring widespread awareness and knowledge of the dangers of fentanyl.

"We're partnering with these health centers to help prevent overdose deaths in our community," said Mayor Mitch Roth. "The most powerful weapon against any epidemic is education, and we are committed to educating our residents so that they can make informed choices to keep themselves and their loved ones safe."

"Fentanyl is the most addictive and potent opioid and the deadliest drug America has ever known," said addiction medicine specialist Dr. Kevin Kunz. "According to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, this synthetic opioid is 50 to 100 times stronger than any other opioid out there. It's more potent than cyanide."

According to Kunz, data from CDC and the National Center for Health Statistics indicate that the leading cause of death for Americans aged 18 to 45 is overdose. One recent tragic death was that of 37-year-old University of Hawai'i football star Colt Brennan, who was found to have a combination of ice, alcohol, and fentanyl in his system.

Jane Clement, Mayor's Executive Assistant, states, "we are planning to bring up-to-date information on the facts, prevention, and treatment to residents utilizing virtual and in-person presentations. Our local experts have organized a 30-minute presentation targeting all ages about the dangers of initiating drug use, addiction, and fentanyl poisoning."

Anyone interested in viewing this presentation in person, please contact Dr. Kimo Alameda at deskoftheceo@bayclinic.org. Seating is limited.

June 9, 2022
5:30 – 6:30 pm
West Hawaii Civic Center Council Chambers

June 23, 2022
5:30 – 6:30 pm
Tutu's House Waimea

June 16, 2022
5:30-6:30 pm
Pahala Community Center

June 30, 2022
5:00-6:00 pm
Puueo Community Center