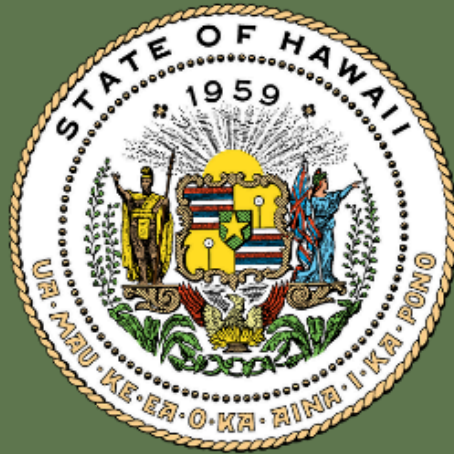


# Annual Report

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2024



Ke Ke'ena Kūpa'a Maui Ola  
Office of Wellness and Resilience  
Office of the Governor

*Our resilience is rooted in our wellness.*

**PREPARED FOR:**  
2025 Hawai'i Legislative Session

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# Letter from Director Tia L. R. Hartsock



As we reflect on our second year as an Office, I'm once again in awe at the difference a year can make. With the incredible dedication of our system partners, community advocates branches of government, and passionate staff, the opportunity to grow this Office and embed trauma-informed approaches continues.

From a celebrated executive order by the Governor, the unprecedented Workplace Wellness & Quality of Life Survey and ensuing Hawai'i Quality of Life & Well-Being Dashboard, and exciting legislation establishing a Peer Support Working Group and the State of Well-Being Project in our Office, it feels like we grew by leaps and bounds in 2024.

Even with all that going on, our primary focus remained on Maui's recovery this year. With the ongoing need to support community healing, our lessons learned have guided us to visualize and synthesize how our office can improve and build upon state policy and procedures in preparing for and responding to traumatic events.

We weren't thinking much ahead to the legislative session and what it may bring for OWR at the beginning of the year, and I couldn't have imagined it would include a bill allowing us to take the lessons we learned on Maui to better prepare and respond to traumatic events—especially with additional staff.

But that's what the State of Well-Being bill (Act 106) did, and now we are deep in strategic planning for the next year with our new team, starting with a landscape analysis of wellness and resilience supports statewide.

I am filled with gratitude to be able to work with this team and our partners in the state and the community toward a shared vision, a vision that has developed and been refined over many years and over countless conversations. My hope for 2025 is to continue to uplift each other, listen, learn and collectively foster hope throughout our communities.

If you have questions about this report and/or just want to talk story, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at [gov.owr@hawaii.gov](mailto:gov.owr@hawaii.gov).

Mālama pono,

*Tia L. R. Hartsock*

Director, Office of Wellness and Resilience  
Office of the Governor, State of Hawai'i

# Brief History & Context

This is an abbreviated history of the Office of Wellness and Resilience, provided for context. For more details, please [see our 2023 Annual Report](#).

## **Trauma-Informed Care Task Force**

The Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR), housed in the Office of the Governor, was crafted out of the work of the state’s Trauma-Informed Care Task Force, the community supporting the task force and champions of trauma-informed care in the legislature.

The statewide, multiyear Trauma-Informed Care Task Force was created by the 2021 Hawai’i State Legislature with the passage of [House Bill 1322](#), becoming [Act 209](#) when Gov. David Ige signed the bill into law in July of that year. Reps. Ty Cullen, Henry J. C. Aquino, Lisa Kitagawa, and Ryan Yamane introduced the bill. The companion bill, [Senate Bill 1242](#), was introduced by Sen. Donovan Dela Cruz.

The task force was conceptualized to propose recommendations for the state’s child-serving agencies and organizations to become collectively more trauma-informed to better serve Hawai’i’s families – and improve the overall health of our communities.

The Trauma-Informed Care Task Force members include representatives from the state’s major public-serving agencies, as well as those from critical nonprofit and community organizations serving families across our islands. Tia L. R. Hartsock, then project director of Data to Wisdom, a federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAHMSA) grant program within the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division (CAMHD) of the Hawai’i Department of Health, served as inaugural chair of the task force until December 2022. Dr. Scott Shimabukuro of CAMHD became chair in January 2023, and continues to serve in that position.

Task Force meetings continued throughout 2024. Details for each meeting are published on the state’s public meetings calendar. Since its inception in early 2023, OWR has provided a report to the task force in most of these monthly meetings.

In accordance with [Act 87](#) (Hawai’i Session Laws 2023), in July 2025, the Task Force will transition into an advisory board for the Office of Wellness and Resilience. The task force adopted a draft framework in late 2023 for trauma-informed and trauma-responsive practice for statewide adoption and implementation by OWR, and their report to the 2025 legislature is also due to December 2024. You can find the full reports online on their website: <https://traumainformed.hawaii.gov/>.

## Creation of the Office of Wellness and Resilience

Governor David Ige signed Senate Bill 2482 in July 2022, creating the nation's first statewide-legislated Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR). The bill is now known as Act 291.

The bill was introduced by Sen. Donovan Dela Cruz. Its companion bill was House Bill 1970, and had a long list of introducers: Reps. Ty Cullen, Henry J.C. Aquino, Della Au Belatti, Patrick Branco, Stacelynn KM Eli, Cedrick Asuega Gates, Troy N. Hashimoto, Greggor Ilagan, Aaron Ling Johanson, Jeanné Kapela, Lisa Kitagawa, Bertrand Kobayashi, Matthew LoPresti, Lisa Marten, Angus McKelvey, Dee Morikawa, Nadine Nakamura, Scott Y. Nishimoto, Richard HK Onishi, Amy Perruso, Adrian Tam, David Tarnas, Tina Wildberger, Ryan Yamane and Scot Z. Matayoshi.

Governor Josh Green appointed Tia Hartsock as the inaugural director of OWR in December 2022.



**Photo 1. Our current OWR team together for the first time in November 2024.**

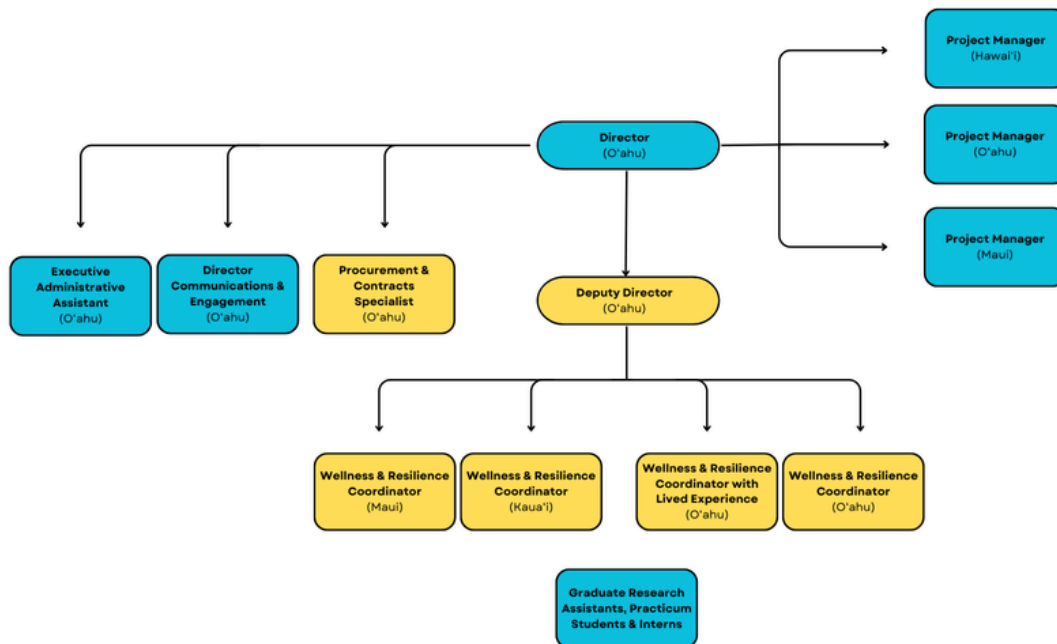
*From left to right:* Naomi Leipold, project manager; Leilani Willing, wellness and resilience coordinator (WRC); Tia Hartsock, director; Keala Kaopuiki-Santos, project manager; Trina Orimoto, deputy director; Erica Yamauchi, director of communications and engagement; Jodie Burgess, procurement and contracts specialist; Kevin Thompson, project manager; front row left to right: Telesia Pasese, executive administrative assistant; Rachel J. Nunies, graduate research assistant; Tikki Bisbee, Ana Malia Kia and Nannie Apalla, WRCs.

## Updated Office Structure & Organizational Chart

The Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) became officially operational on Jan. 18, 2023, when Director Hartsock reported for her first day of work. We became fully staffed in June 2023 when our six positions were filled after a rigorous statewide application and interview process.

In July 2024, [Act 106](#) was signed into law, which expanded our office with six additional positions, bringing our total staff to 12.

We have been intentional about hiring a diverse team from a wide variety of both personal and professional backgrounds, but with close ties to the state and our unique culture. We also chose to recruit and hire statewide, and four of our 12 staff reside on neighbor islands as of October 2024: Keala Kaopuiki-Santos is one of our project managers and lives on Maui; Kev Thompson is also a project manager and lives in Hilo, on the island of Hawai'i. With our six new positions, Tikki Bisbee lives on Maui and Nannie Apalla lives on Kaua'i. They are two of our four new wellness and resilience coordinators. With these additions, OWR is now established in all four counties across the state.



**Figure 1. Office of Wellness and Resilience organizational chart, depicting our new office structure as of October 2024.** New positions via Act 106 are in yellow, with the original positions in blue. Senior staff report to the director, with the wellness and resilience coordinators reporting to the deputy director. The graduate research assistants (GRAs) and interns are supervised by other staff depending on their interest area, as well as their academic and professional background.



## *Kuleana (formerly “Mission”), Vision & Values*

After being fully staffed in June 2023, the Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) team went quickly into planning mode, participating in numerous strategic planning meetings and discussions throughout the summer. In mid-July, we held a planning event with our key state and community partners to inform our mission, vision and values.

This process was interrupted, however, due to the wildfire crisis on Maui. Then, during the 2024 Legislative Session, we were written into Act 106, which fundamentally changed the structure of our Office by adding six new positions. With these new additions and focus, we again embarked upon a strategic planning process in 2024, the results of which are our new kuleana and vision statements, as well as our values.

We are grateful to our many state and community-based partners in this work, as well as Aunty Kū Kahakalau of Hilo and the late Aunty Puanani Burgess of Waiʻanae, for their mānaʻo, insight and consultation that have brought us this far.

Our **kuleana** is to strengthen our state service systems, using hope-centered principles as strategies to make Hawaiʻi a trauma-informed state. We break down barriers that impact the well-being of Hawaiʻi’s people—from keiki to kūpuna.

Our **vision** is a thriving Hawaiʻi where keiki, ‘ohana and communities are well, resilient and connected. We envision state service systems grounded in Hawaiʻi-informed, hope-centered care.

Our **key values** are:

- **Aloha** (loving-kindness and care)
- **Pono** (righteous, with honor and hope)
- **Haʻahaʻa** (humility)
- **Hōʻihi** (deep respect, sacredness)
- **Lōkahi** (equity, balance, harmony)

We lead with **aloha**, and try to always do what is **pono** for our state, our communities and our people. There is a place for everyone in creating a hope-centered Hawaiʻi, and we strive to keep **haʻahaʻa** and **hōʻihi** at the center of everything we do.

By coupling these values with the principles of trauma-informed care, we seek **lōkahi** with a shared sense of purpose, not only as the Office of Wellness and Resilience, but with all those we collaborate with in this work.

## Guiding 'Ōlelo No'eau

In addition to our revised kuleana, vision and values statements, our Office has also adopted the following 'Ōlelo No'eau as a guidepost for our work, gifted to us by Aunty Kū Kahakalau. We believe it encompasses both the promise and responsibility of trauma-informed, hope-centered care.

It also echoes the positive feedback we have received when people learn about the philosophy and principles of trauma-informed care. When people understand the context of trauma and how to utilize it to improve their individual interactions, as well as our state services as a whole, there is genuine appreciation and excitement in learning this new way of serving others.

### **He 'ike 'ana ia i ka pono.**

It is a recognizing of the right thing.

*One has seen the right thing to do and has done it.*



### **Photo 2. Our full staff during a cultural training with Aunty Kū in Hilo.**

*Left to right, top row:* Keala Kaopuiki-Santos, project manager; Ana Kia, wellness and resilience coordinator (WRC); Jodie L.H. Burgess, procurement and contracts specialist; Tikki Bisbee, WRC; Kev Thompson, project manager; Aunty Kū Kahakalau, cultural advisor and executive director of Kū-A-Kānāka; Telesia Pasese, executive administrative assistant; Leilani Willing, WRC. *Front row:* Nannie Apalla, WRC; Rachel J. Nunies, graduate research assistant; Naomi Leipold, project manager; Trina Orimoto, deputy director; Erica Yamauchi, director of communications and engagement; Tia L.R. Hartsock, director.

## Updated Principles of Trauma-Informed Care

We recently updated the verbiage of the principles of trauma-informed care (below) we use as a foundation for much of the work we do within the state. The principles are inspired by SAMHSA's *Concept of Trauma & Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach* (2014).



**Figure 2.** Our updated six pillars of trauma-informed care protect against causing trauma, as well as the re-traumatization of trauma survivors.



# Legislation & Policy

## 2024 Legislative Session Highlights

The Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) testified on 16 total measures that included bills and resolutions that addressed mental health, state workforce well-being and economic supports for families. Five of those bills, below, passed conference and were signed into law by Governor Josh Green, M.D.

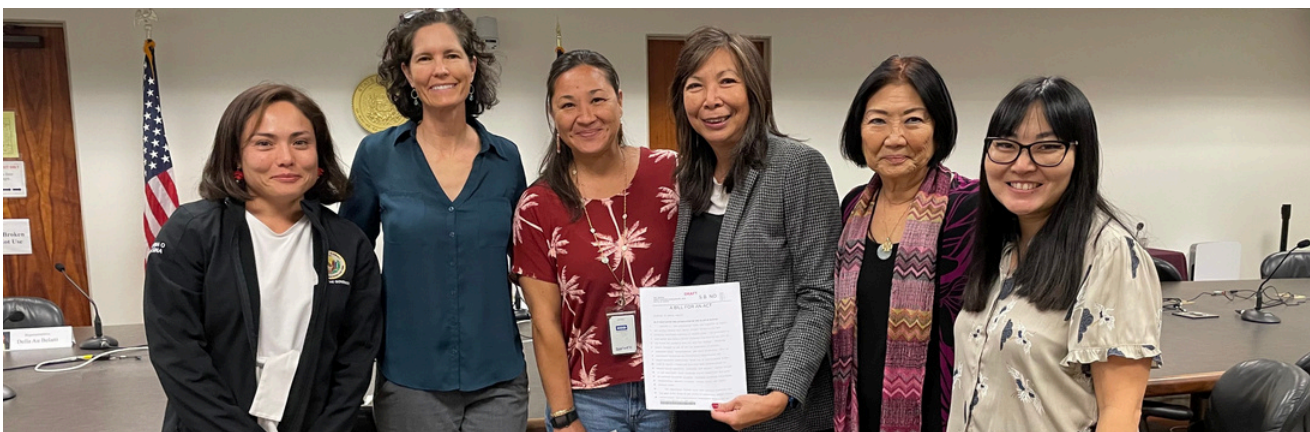
- S.B. 3094, now Act 88 re: Peer Support Specialists Working Group
- S.B. 3279, now Act 106 re: State of Well-Being Project
- S.B. 2305, now Act 158 re: Silver Alert Program
- H.B. 1830, now Act 93 re: Provisional/Associate Licensure
- H.B. 2042, now Act 102 re: Youth Mental Health Fund

### Senate Bill 3094 (Act 88): Peer Support Specialists Working Group

S.B. 3094 established a Peer Support Specialist Working Group within OWR. The Working Group will develop and make recommendations for a framework for peer support specialists in the State. Working Group members consist of several state departments, community partners, and peers support specialists. In addition to looking at best practices to certifying and credentialing peers, the framework will examine trauma-informed supervision and sustainable funding to support the work of peer support specialists. For more information about the Peer Support Specialists Working Group, see page 31.

### Senate Bill 3279 (Act 106): State of Well-Being Project

S.B. 3279 expanded our Office of Wellness and Resilience with additional staff to assess and enhance existing well-being supports in our communities statewide. The State of Well-Being Project will strengthen mental health and well-being supports by building upon existing programs and establishing services when they are non-existent and/or there are significant gaps. The Project is built upon the approach that well-being services are healing when they are culturally grounded and community-informed.



### **Photo 3. “We have a bill!” Senate Bill 3279 passes its final committee.**

*From left to right: Naomi Leipold, OWR project manager and policy lead; Rep. Lisa Marten; Tia Hartsock, OWR director; Sen. Joy San Buenaventura; Sen. Sharon Moriwaki; Rep. Jenna Takenouchi*



**Photo 4.** Attendees from the Office of Wellness and Resilience, the Trauma-Informed Care Task Force and trauma-informed movement gathered to celebrate Governor Josh Green, M.D., declaring Hawai'i a trauma-informed state on Feb. 20, 2024.

## **Looking Forward to the 2025 Legislative Session**

We are working on several bills related to addressing the recommendations of the Mālama 'Ohana Working Group, as well as state workforce wellness.

### **Administrative Policy**

#### *Executive Order: Trauma-Informed State*

February 20, 2024, was a milestone day for the Office of Wellness and Resilience, when Governor Josh Green, M.D., signed an executive order, declaring Hawai'i a trauma-informed state! It's something we've been working towards for more than 10 years in the trauma-informed movement in Hawai'i.

The Office held a news conference and reception in late February to celebrate the executive order, which invites state departments to collaborate with OWR to integrate trauma-informed care principles like safety, transparency and collaboration, and build resilience in our communities and state workforce.

In the implementation of the executive order, we began to engage more deeply with state departments on their staff wellness and resilience goals, including with the Hawai'i Workplace Wellness & Well-Being Survey, Kupa'a Maui Ola Summit, and individual meetings with departmental leadership on their departmental survey results regarding workforce wellness and their trauma-informed care goals.

## **Youth Mental Health Policy Academy, National Governors Association (NGA)**

In February 2024, Hawai'i was selected (as one of six states in the country) to participate in the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) Policy Academy to Drive Thriving Youth Mental Health and Well-Being along with Alabama, Kentucky, New Jersey, Oklahoma and Virginia. The Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) serves as chair.

Hawai'i's team consists of representatives from state departments and agencies, as well as community partners, including the Office of the Governor, Office of Wellness and Resilience (Chair); Department of Education, School-Based Behavioral Health; Department of Health, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division and Family Health Services Division; Department of Human Services, Director's Office, Child Welfare Services Branch and Med-QUEST Division; EPIC 'Ohana; Executive Office on Early Learning; Family Programs Hawai'i; Hawai'i Youth Services Network; and the Office of Youth Services. Two youth peer support advisors from EPIC 'Ohana provide key insight on the team and participate in the Policy Academy's Youth Advisory Council.

The Policy Academy team has engaged in a yearlong opportunity to build on and advance holistic efforts to protect and support strong youth mental health and emotional well-being across state agencies, including strategies across prevention, awareness, treatment, and community and youth engagement. The team has used technical assistance (TA) from the National Governors Association to help facilitate a trauma-informed approach and garner an understanding of each agency's responsibilities and priorities, align efforts and resources, identify service gaps, and move initiatives forward. Through this effort, Hawai'i is focused on shifting narrative from youth mental health to a community filled with joy and hope in order to foster a state where our keiki and 'ohana can thrive.

The Hawai'i's Policy Academy team focused on three key activities:

1. Conduct resource-mapping to better understand system gaps and develop policies to address needs.

2. Develop a Hawai'i Keiki Mental Health Navigation Guide in alignment with the NGA pillars of the policy academy.

*Pillar 1:* Address an upstream preventive approach to build resilience, hope and joy.

*Pillar 2:* Increase place based collective community awareness and thereby reduce stigma.

*Pillar 3:* Ensure access and affordability of quality care that is inclusive of clinical, community and cultural trauma-informed approaches.

*Pillar 4:* Train and support caregivers, educators, and providers with an emphasis on raising voices of the keiki served and a focus on peer supports.

3. Support youth advisors as active participants in the process as policy leaders.

From March to October 2024, OWR co-facilitated monthly TA sessions with NGA to assist in refining integrated plans. Youth advisors consistently ensured interventions remained accessible and resonant with the lived experiences of Hawai'i's youth.





**Photo 5.** Community-based organizations and state agencies, including representatives from the Depts. of Health, Human Services, Education, Law Enforcement, Corrections and Rehabilitation, Judiciary and the University of Hawai'i, gathered at Windward Community College on O'ahu in October for the NGA site visit.

In October 2024, OWR convened and facilitated a three-day NGA site visit to deep dive into existing resources, barriers and opportunities. *Day 1* focused on aligning Governor Green's trauma-informed priorities and identifying the Hawai'i Interagency State Youth Network of Care (HI-SYNC) as a key structure to maintain interagency efforts. *Day 2* gathered over 55 government leaders and stakeholders to map resources, identify common challenges, address cultural competencies, and examine solutions. Youth advisors highlighted strategies to simplify service navigation and strengthen community connections. *Day 3* emphasized engaging commissions, caucuses, and community organizations to build trust, increase data transparency and ensure that decision-making processes incorporate grassroots insights. Future steps involve clarifying engagement goals, drafting formal outreach letters, and continuing listening sessions with community groups and lived experience experts.

### Data-Driven Improvements & Ongoing Engagement

In the final months of technical assistance, a broad stakeholder survey informed a resource inventory. Commissions were engaged on their priorities for youth mental health as the beginning of a more robust community engagement strategy that the group arrived on. This data-driven approach would support continuous improvement, transparency and trust-building among partners.

### Integrated Frameworks & Systemic Outcomes

This technical assistance drove the departments as well as the community and youth advisors to collectively guide Hawai'i's trauma-informed, culturally grounded progress for the mental health landscape. Over time, as HI-SYNC's data capacities mature, Hawai'i can refine interventions, reduce delays, and ensure interventions align with community values and emerging best practices, potentially utilizing technology to improve service delivery.

**Current Projects:  
Wellness Celebrations,  
Challenges, Barriers,  
& Unmet Needs**

## Hawai'i Quality of Life & Well-Being Dashboard

Beginning in 2023, the Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) partnered with the Health Policy Initiative at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa College of Social Sciences (UH-Mānoa) to conduct both community and state workforce wellness and resilience assessments through mixed-method surveying.

Through the spring and early summer of 2024, the Hawai'i Quality of Life and Workplace Wellness survey was distributed across the state and initiated by more than 10,800 Hawai'i residents. In total, nearly 8,800 residents completed the survey in its entirety, and the results have created the Hawai'i Quality of Life and Well-Being Dashboard.

The dashboard is now publicly available to inform legislation and policy, grant-making, reporting and other funding needs, population-specific programming, and coordination of collaborative efforts with the goal of improving individual and system-level outcomes. To view and learn more about the survey and interactive dashboard, visit [health-study.com](https://health-study.com). The website includes a user guide, as well as policy briefs on workforce wellness and medical debt, and will continue to be updated, so make sure to sign up for updates on the data and study overall.

It is now the largest statewide dataset related to health in Hawai'i ever, as well as the largest survey using the Center for Disease Control (CDC)'s National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health Worker Well-Being Questionnaire (NIOSH WellBQ).



**Photo 6.** In partnership with our partners at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, OWR filmed a promotional video with UH-Mānoa faculty and students to encourage state residents to take our survey on workplace wellness and quality of life, with a special focus on state workers.





**Photo 7.** We co-hosted a webinar with the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa to celebrate the dashboard's launch on held on Dec. 12, 2024. During the event, Dr. Jack Barile and Deputy Director Trina Orimoto, Ph.D., publicly introduced the Hawai'i Quality of Life & Well-Being Dashboard.

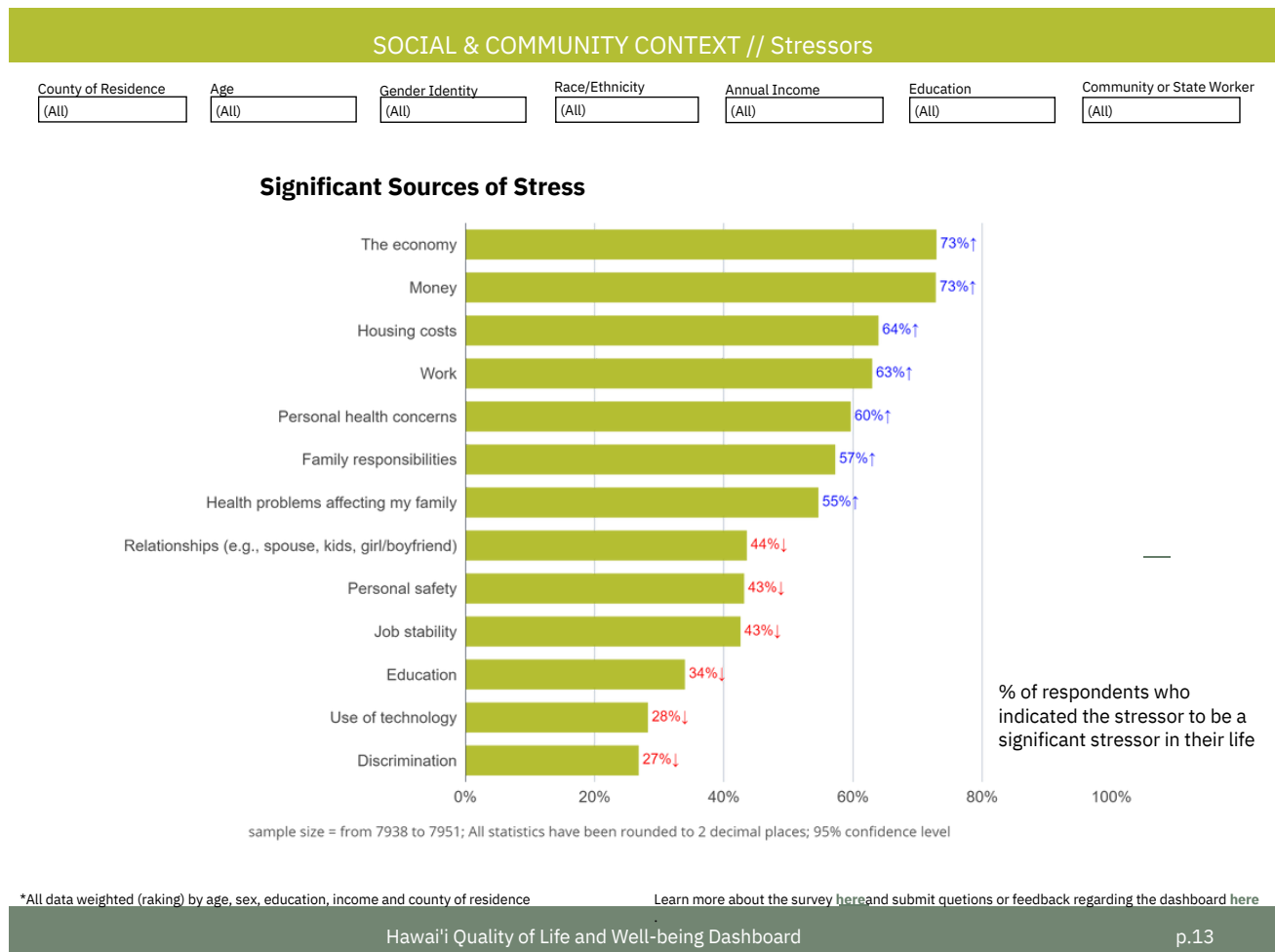
Key findings from the dashboard include:

- The economy (73%), personal finances (73%), and housing costs (64%) rank as the most significant stressors for residents, particularly for households with incomes below \$50,000. A sample graph from the dashboard, showing this economic strain and stress, is provided on the next page.
- In addition, among those surveyed, 40% considered moving out of the state in the past year due to high living costs, a rate even higher among Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities (47%).
- Health disparities: Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander residents experience notably higher levels of stress and unhealthy days compared to White and Asian residents. These disparities are compounded by challenges in accessing affordable healthcare, with 19% of all surveyed residents reporting medical debt over \$500.
- Community strength and workplace support: Despite hardships, 67% of residents feel safe in their neighborhoods, and a similar percentage report that neighbors are willing to help each other. Workplaces are also viewed positively, with 83% of employees feeling respected by their employers and 78% feeling that their contributions are valued.
- Workplace priorities: The dashboard data reveals a shift in workplace expectations. Employees looking to change jobs prioritize flexible work schedules, paid family leave, and telework options, while those planning to stay with their current employer value traditional benefits like health insurance and retirement contributions.



We have been meeting with state department leadership on their specific data, and in 2025, we are planning events to share the dashboards with other organizations and communities across the state, gathering feedback along the way to improve for the 2026 version of the survey.

The Hawai'i Quality of Life and Well-Being Dashboard is a partnership between the Health Policy Initiative at UH-Mānoa's College of Social Sciences, and the Office of Wellness and Resilience in the Office of the Governor. All data is housed with UH-Mānoa. If you have questions, please contact [hpi@hawaii.edu](mailto:hpi@hawaii.edu).



**Figure 3. Sample graph from the Hawai'i Quality of Life & Well-Being Dashboard regarding economic strain and stress.** The economy (73%), personal finances (73%), and housing costs (64%) rank as the most significant stressors for residents, particularly for households with incomes below \$50,000. In addition, among those surveyed, 40% considered moving out of the state in the past year due to high living costs, a rate even higher among Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities (47%).

## Kūpa‘a Maui Ola: Inaugural Summit

The Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) held its inaugural Kūpa‘a Maui Ola, Hawai‘i’s Wellness & Resilience Summit, on May 31, at the Ko‘olau Ballrooms in Kāne‘ohe. In total, 282 organizational leaders, supervisors, attorneys general, peer supports, and contracted providers from the state departments and nonprofits below attended the event. With the task of rolling out various trauma-informed care (TIC) initiatives with state agencies and the workforce as part of our trauma-informed state declaration alongside Governor Josh Green, M.D., in February 2024, OWR designed the conference event as an opportunity to formally kick off this effort and inspire champions for the cause.

Our primary intentions for the Summit were (a) to provide an understanding of trauma-informed care efforts in Hawai‘i, (b) how and why the Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) was established, (c) an overview of the OWR’s first year, including current and upcoming priorities and initiatives.

We were able to introduce our trauma-informed state declaration with Governor Green and First Lady Jaime Kanani Green as our morning speakers, highlight the wisdom of Dr. Val Kalei Kanuha as our keynote speaker, and share initial results of our statewide survey on well-being in partnership with the University of Hawai‘i.

Through our interactive panels and live graphic-recording team with The Good Juju, Co., we also heard directly from departments and programs that have successfully implemented trauma-informed care principles, and gather feedback on what’s needed to move the work forward. Attendees engaged in a hands-on Brain Architecture Game to understand the long-lasting impacts of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) on a developing brain, as well as wellness activities of their choice which included ‘ukulele and hula, lauhala and coconut frond weaving, and meditation.

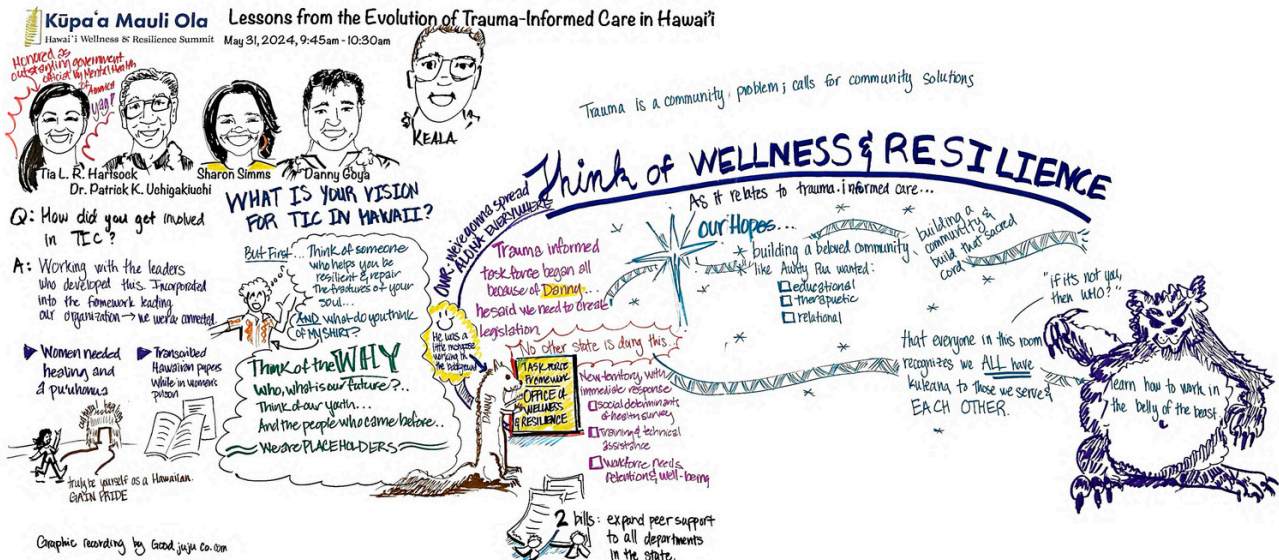
We are incredibly grateful to our Summit sponsors for their generous support in making the inaugural Kūpa‘a Maui Ola, Hawai‘i Wellness & Resilience Summit, a historic milestone event for the state – Hawai‘i Community Foundation, Consuelo Zobel Alger Foundation, and Hawai‘i Children’s Action Network.



**Photo 8.** Left to right: Naomi Leipold, project manager; Erica Yamauchi, director of communications and engagement; Rachel J. Nunies, graduate research assistant; Jodie Burgess, procurement and contracts specialist; Shugufa Basij-Rasikh, graduate research assistant; Sara Thorn, Leah Delos Santos and Mia Ogata, interns; Kev Thompson, project manager; Tia Hartsock, director; Keala Kaopuiki-Santos, project manager

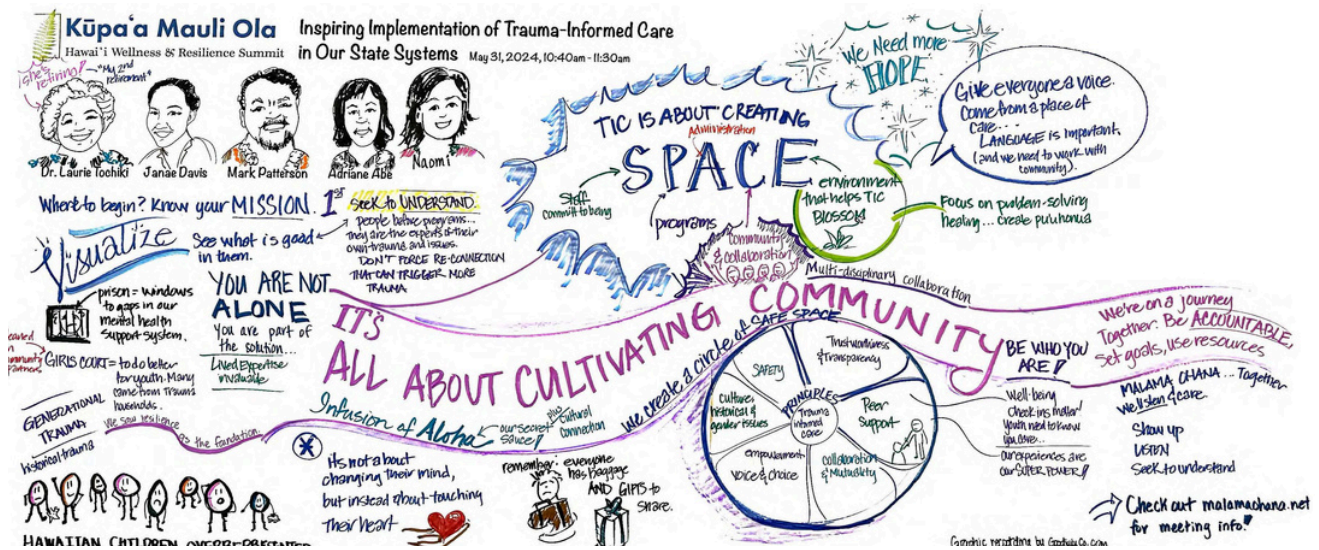


**Figure 4.** Graphic notes on the summit’s opening protocol by Kumu Kawaikapuokalani Hewett, welcome and opening remarks by Governor Josh Green, M.D., and First Lady Jaime Kanani Green, and keynote address by Dr. V. Kalei Kanuha. All visual note-taking by The Good Juju Co.

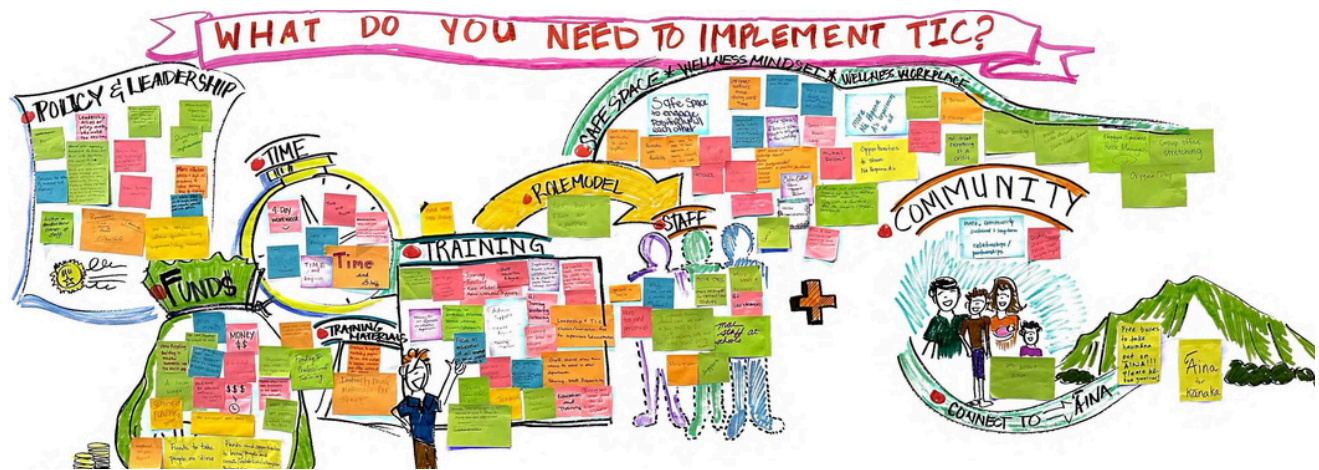


**Figure 5.** Graphic notes on the summit’s first morning panel: Lessons from the Evolution of Trauma-Informed Care in Hawaiʻi.





**Figure 6.** Graphic notes on the summit's second morning panel: Inspiring Implementation of Trauma-Informed Care in Our State Systems.



**Figure 7.** Graphic notes organize the collection of summit attendees' thoughts regarding what they need to implement trauma-informed care in their own workplaces.



# Kūpa‘a Maui Ola

Hawai‘i Wellness & Resilience Summit



Photos 9-17. Scenes from OWR's inaugural wellness and resilience summit in May.

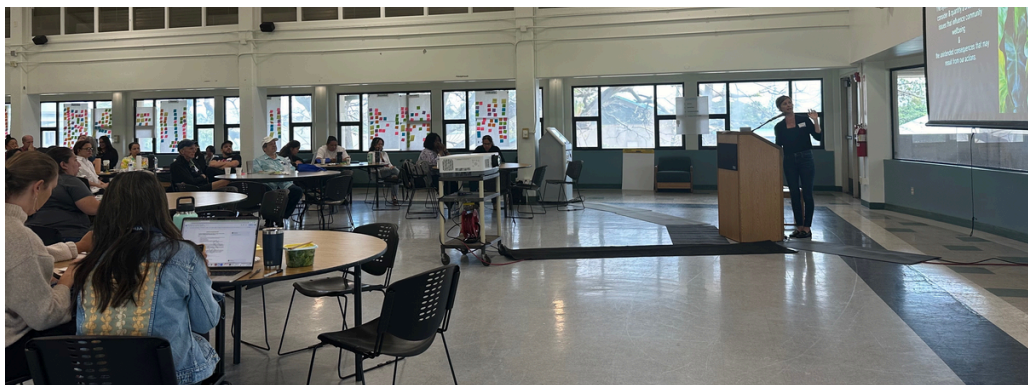


## Maui Coordinated Mental Health Response

We are committed to helping coordinate the long-term mental health response to the wildfires on Maui. Since the fires in August 2023, our Office has held Maui Mental Health Coordinated Response meetings, including mental health professionals on the ground on Maui, philanthropic, nonprofit and advocacy organizations, service providers and government employees. The meetings have been instrumental in standing up crisis services reaching thousands of survivors, breaking down barriers, and sharing resources and lessons learned.

This **effort has totaled 101 coordination calls held between August 2023 and December 2024**, with hundreds of participants representing local, state and national agencies, including mental health professionals on the ground on Maui, philanthropic, nonprofit and advocacy organizations, service providers and government employees. At first, our calls were held daily. After the three-month mark, we moved to calls every other day, and starting in Jan. and throughout 2024, we moved to a weekly cadence, which we plan to continue into 2025.

For information about our 2023 Maui disaster response efforts, please [review our 2023 Annual Report](#).



**Photos 18-20.** Top: Maui community service providers and partners attend the March 6 convening to inform the disaster response framework. Left: The Kanikapila Project during the wellness activities at the convening. Right: OWR staff providing information about Maui mental health recovery efforts for the Office of the Governor's social media platforms.

## *Maui Strong Mental Health Response: Six-Month Convening*

On March 6, the Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) **convened about 80 participants from 45 organizations** at University of Hawai'i Maui College (UHMC) to debrief the first six months of the mental health response, as well as plan for the long term. We plan to share a findings report and framework to inform future disaster response efforts here in Hawai'i and in other communities. Mahalo to Kamehameha Schools for facilitation support and UHMC's Chancellor Lui Hokoana for hosting us.

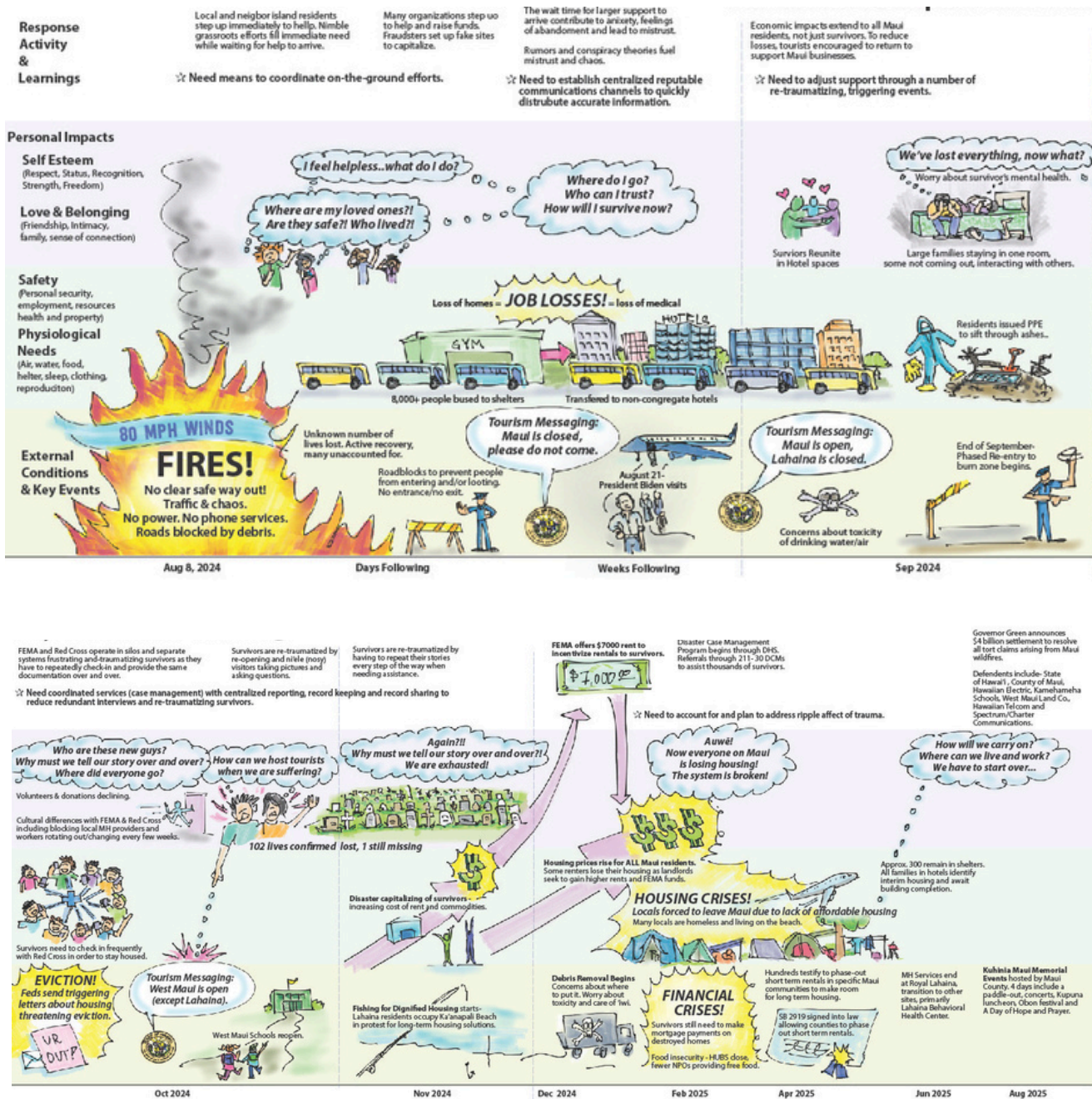
During the Maui gathering, we also took some time at the end of the day for wellness activities, including lomilomi, kanikapila, shinrin-yoku (Japanese: "forest-bathing") and yoga. It was the first in-person gathering since meeting regularly via Zoom to help coordinate the disaster mental health response.



**Photo 21.** Maui community service providers and partners in the mental health and wellness recovery efforts inform a timeline on March 6, reflecting on the needs, strengths and system barriers they encountered with survivors of the fire to help in the creation of a disaster response framework for mental health and wellness.



# Maui Wildfire Impact on Community & Survivor Well-Being



**Figure 8.** Draft graphic notes from the 6-month Maui Strong Mental Health response convening. Visual note-taking by The Good Juju Co.



## *Response Support and Coordination*

In partnership with the Dept. of Health and statewide service providers, our Maui-based project manager Keala Keopuiki-Santos continued to coordinate activities for survivors at the Royal Lahaina Resort through August to support overall well-being. Activities included lomilomi and kūkākūkā with Hui Ho'omalua and Laukanaka, 'ukulele lessons with the Kanikapila Project, arts and crafts with EPIC 'Ohana and the Dept. of Education's Office of Student Support Services, as well as individual and group therapy and workshops.

Other highlights from our work on Maui this year include:

- Collaboration with Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF) to contract and deploy Mental Health Providers to provide **support to survivors at identified community events**, informational sessions and planning meetings.
- Consultation and **collaboration with HCF regarding mental health funding** priorities.
- **Coordination of youth outreach and survivor wellness events** at the Royal Lahaina Resort non-congregate shelter.
- Coordination of **mental health volunteers to support survivors at Kuhinia Maui**, a week of Maui wildfire remembrance events.
- Participation in County of Maui Health and Human Services Recovery Support Function Meetings: bi-monthly meetings with County of Maui, FEMA, and the Depts. of Health and Human Services to discuss mental health needs, initiatives and proposals.
- Serving on **Hō'ola Iā Maui Nui A Kama: Long-Term Recovery Group (LTRG)** Advisory Board monthly meetings and LTRG Social, Emotional Spiritual Committee bimonthly meetings.
- Dept. of Education Support: Coordinated volunteer **mental health support for teachers** at Lahaina schools during memorial week.
- Collaboration with Hui Ho'omalua, the Kanikapila Project and the Dept. of Health to plan for regular wellness activities and support of community events.
- Ongoing trauma-informed care **trainings for new disaster case managers** within the Dept. of Human Services.
- Collaboration with One Shared Future, Hui Ho'omalua, Dept. of Health and Maui County to provide **wellness opportunities for county staff** active in response/recovery.
- **Coordination of volunteers** to support the community-based Living Pono Project Hub.

## *Sigbee Wellness & Resilience App*

Disaster case managers with the Dept. of Human Services also have access to our pilot of Sigbee, an innovative (yet optional) app that provides updates on workforce wellness, connection, job confidence and resilience.

As of November 2024, there are currently 57 active employees utilizing the Sigbee wellness and resilience app as part of our pilot program. Other departments participating in the pilot include EPIC 'Ohana's Youth Partner Program, the Office of the Governor, and the Office of Wellness & Resilience. The Department of Health's Child and Mental Health Division has also recently expressed interest in participating in the pilot, which could add 100-200 new users in early 2025.

Rollout of the Sigbee app pilot has occurred in phases as we identified ready partners with supervisors and staff willing to opt into consistent use of the app and make it a part of their workplace culture. OWR has also contracted the Baker's Center for Children and Families to assist with implementation consultation, the development of pre- and post-evaluations, and helpful documents, such as a supervisor FAQ and supervisor tip sheet.

Due to the phased launches and remaining unused licenses, OWR is currently negotiating a contract extension to allow continued use of the Sigbee wellness and resilience app to all current users through the end of fiscal year 2024-2025. At the end of the pilot, participating departments may determine whether they want to continue to utilize the Sigbee app through individual contracts.

## Maui One-Year Remembrance Events

The Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) assisted in the planning and staffing of several remembrance events in August across Maui. OWR participated in and helped to coordinate mental health providers at eight different events over four days alongside Governor's Office and other state department staff. Participating in the memorial events on Maui were not only part of our work, but essential for our own staff to heal alongside the community and support this difficult milestone in one of the most traumatic disasters in Hawai'i's history.



**Photo 22.** Above, OWR's Maui-based team member Keala Kaopuiki-Santos at the Lahaina Obon Festival, part of the remembrance events.



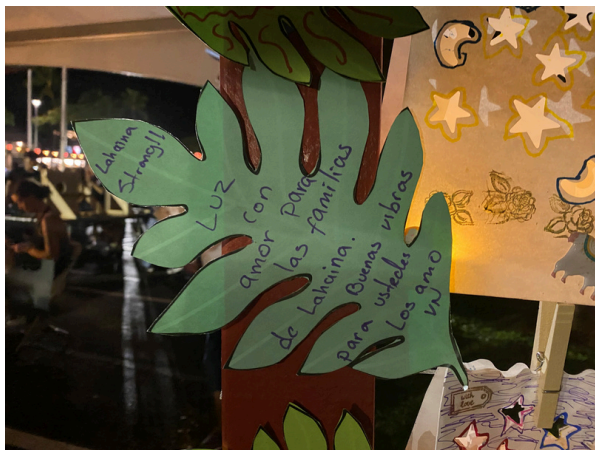
**Photo 23.** Above, Dr. Robin Miyamoto of Hui Ho'omalua and EPIC 'Ohana staff participating in the paddle-out event.

## Maui: A Year Later Kuhinia Maui Remembrance Events



**Photo 24.** Above, Keala Kaopuiki-Santos, Gail Murakami, Tina Boteilho and Director Tia Hartsock at the paddle-out event.

**Photos 25 & 26.** At right, luminary crafts created by survivors and community members at the events.





## Waiʻanae Community Response

In collaboration with the Department of Education (DOE), the Office of Wellness and Resilience participated in several community-based events that fostered community engagement and built resilience as a response to several tragic incidents of violence in Waiʻanae.

Our partnership has created opportunities for positive interactions within the Waiʻanae community, helping to support healing in light of these recent community traumas. These events have included the Night Under the Stars and WinterFest at Waiʻanae High School, the Waiʻanae Community Christmas Parade Hoʻolauleʻa, and the Honolulu City Lights Huakaʻi with the ʻOhana Ola O Kahumana transitional shelter.

Our efforts have been supported by state providers, such as Departments of Education, Human Resources Development, Health (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division and Adult Mental Health Division), Human Services, Labor and Industrial Relations, Law Enforcement and Honolulu Police Department and Work Hawaiʻi, as well as community partners including Helping Hands, Kākoʻo Hawaiʻi Mental Health Collective, Kamehameha Schools – Kaiaulu, University of Hawaiʻi at West Oʻahu, and Be SMART for Kids (Everytown for Gun Safety).



**Photo 27:** OWR staff and other state agencies, as well as community providers, come together to support the Waiʻanae Coast community at the Night Under the Stars event in November.

# Working Groups & Task Forces

The Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) both convenes and participates on a number of state and national working groups and task forces. We have highlighted a few below with 2024 updates.

### **Breakthrough Therapies Working Group**

In August 2023, OWR announced the establishment of the Breakthrough Therapies Task Force although a bill mandating the task force failed to pass during the legislative session ([House Bill 1340](#)). The Task Force comprised local physicians, psychiatrists, mental health professionals and government stakeholders.

The original purpose of the Task Force, per that bill, included efforts to develop recommendations regarding key issues related to the overall objective of expanding therapeutic access to two key substances: MDMA (3,4-Methylenedioxy methamphetamine) and psilocybin. Both substances have received "breakthrough therapy" status from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in 2017 and 2018/2019, respectively.

As the Task Force began meeting, it organically started to focus more on developing evidence-based, healing-centered recommendations. The collective of members meeting regularly agreed a pivot in overall objectives was necessary without a legislative mandate, as the more informal nature of the group's meetings and structure would not be conducive to offering official recommendations, deliverables and/or action steps.

"Breakthrough Therapy" designation is intended to expedite the development and review of drugs for serious or life-threatening conditions. The criteria for breakthrough therapy designation requires preliminary clinical evidence that demonstrates the drug may have substantial improvement on at least one clinically significant endpoint over available therapy.

Several substances have received Breakthrough Therapy Designation from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for addressing various mental health issues to include:

- Brexanolone
- Cannabidiol (CBD)
- Esketamine
- Ketamine
- MDMA (3,4-Methylenedioxy methamphetamine)
- Psilocybin

## Peer Support Specialists Working Group

Signed into law in June 2024 by Governor Josh Green, M.D., [Act 88](#) provides the Office of Wellness and Resilience the authority to convene a working group to discuss, for the first time in a statewide forum, a vision and framework for how the state can systematically infuse the voices of people who have had experience navigating our social service systems with the goal to improve those systems.

Specifically, the Working Group must:

1. Identify best practices and create, develop and adopt a statewide framework for peer support specialists.
2. Identify a trauma-informed model of supervision of peer support specialists.
3. Provide an inventory of current use of peer support specialists.
4. Develop a sustainability plan identifying federal and state funding streams to incorporate requirements to establish peer support as a Medicaid-billable service.

The Working Group consists of several State department representatives, community partners, and people with lived experience. As the Working Group is made up of a wide array of people working in various roles on peer support, the first two months were dedicated to pilina (relationship, connection)-building, discussing the impact peer support services has, and collectively learning about the different peer supports that is available across the State.

In the November meeting, the Working Group voted to establish Permitted Interaction Groups (PIGs) to establish three PIGs around the following three topic areas: 1) Adult peer support inventory, 2) Youth peer support inventory and 3) Family peer support inventory. The three PIGs were charged with creating an inventory list of peer support services that are available in Hawai'i for their designated populations.

In the December meeting, the Working Group collectively discussed the definition of "peer support specialists" for the framework. In the subsequent months, the Working Group is looking to establish additional PIGs to further establish required components of the framework.

Meeting agendas, minutes, recordings, and resources shared in the meetings can be found at [owr.hawaii.gov/peersupport](https://owr.hawaii.gov/peersupport). For more information and/or to be added to the working group's mailing list, email [gov.peers@hawaii.gov](mailto:gov.peers@hawaii.gov).

## Mālama 'Ohana Working Group

On June 14, 2023, [Act 86](#) was signed into law by Governor Green signifying the State's commitment to uplift the voices of 'ohana and keiki affected by the Child Welfare System (CWS). Through OWR, the Mālama 'Ohana Working Group (MOWG) brought community partners together to improve and transform the child welfare system. Uplifting the voices of parents and youth with lived experience, building collaboration between community and state and deep listening are critical components for authentic transformation in our approach to support some of our most vulnerable families and children.

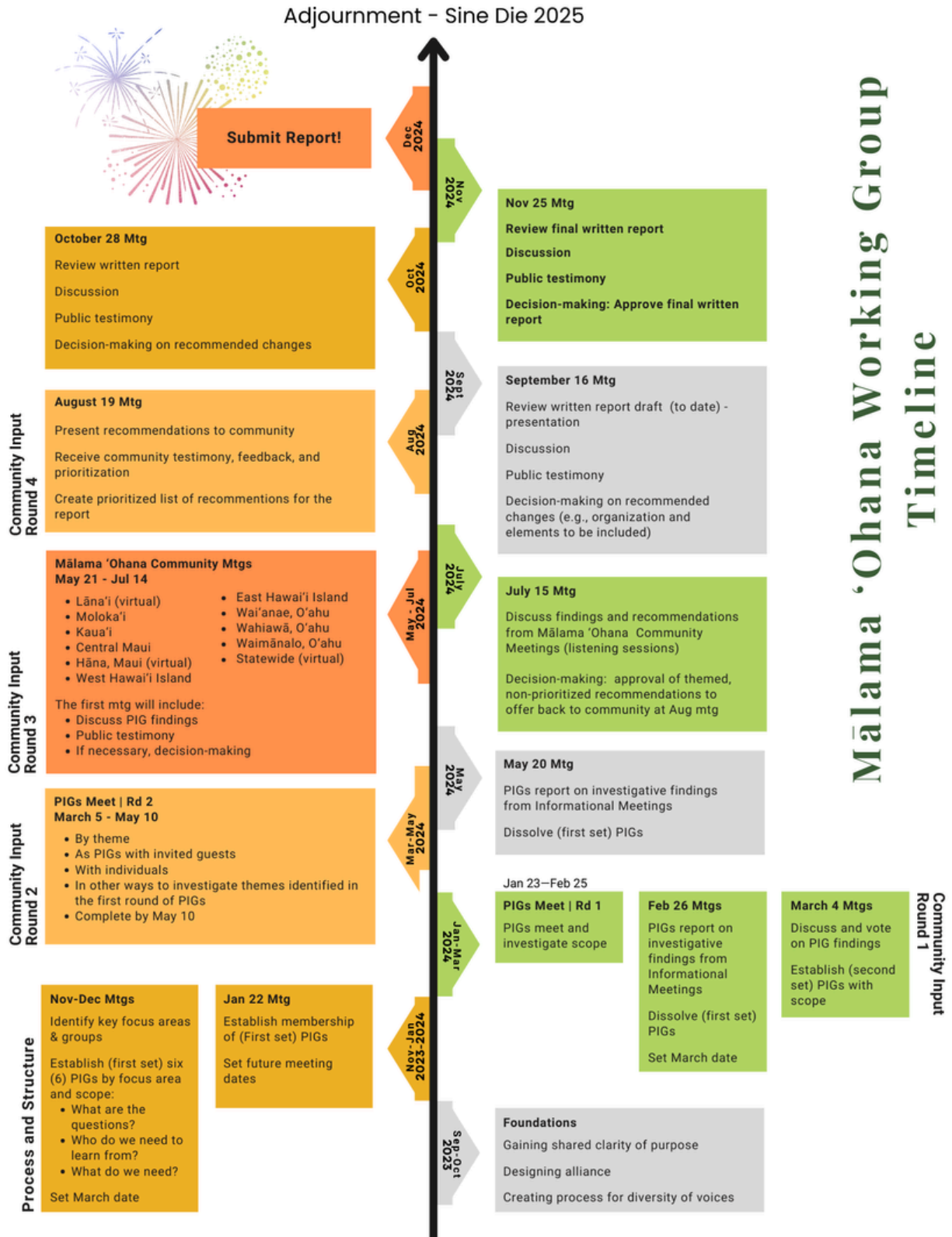
The MOWG held its first meeting in September 2023 and continued into 2024, holding **24 official meetings, including 11 community listening sessions** across the state. The MOWG also created six Permitted Interaction Groups to further investigate specific topics including Keiki & 'Ōpio (Children & Youth), Mākua & 'Ohana (Parents & Family), Lawe Hānai (Caregivers), Hui Kaiāulu (Community Supports), Hui Ho'opūlama (System Supports), and Kanaka & Po'e Pasifika (Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders).

The working group is comprised of 17 members including youth, kin, and resource caregivers with lived experience and representatives from EPIC 'Ohana, Hale Kipa, Department of Human Services, Kamehameha Schools, Office of Hawaiian Affairs and Lili'uokalani Trust. To learn more, visit [malamaohana.net](http://malamaohana.net).

List of Mālama 'Ohana Working Group members:

- Chiemi Davis, Lili'uokalani Trust (designee)
- Stacy Ferreira, Office of Hawaiian Affairs (designee)
- Daisy Hartsfield (designee), director, Dept. of Human Services (DHS) Social Services Division (SSD)
- Kacie Lambert, former foster youth, EPIC 'Ohana and HI HOPES (Hawai'i Helping Our People Envision Success) Youth Leadership Board
- April Lum, licensed resource caregiver
- Melissa Mayo, former foster youth, HI HOPES Youth Leadership Board
- Amanda Mundon, kinship resource caregiver
- Kimberly Nabarro, birth parent
- Kailene Nihipali-Sanchez, kinship resource caregiver
- Elladine Olevao, DHS Child Welfare Services Branch
- Lisa Rapozo, DHS Child Welfare Services Branch (Kaua'i)
- Venus Rosete-Medeiros, Hale Kipa, Inc. (co-chair)
- Kayla Samson, birth parent
- Scott Shimabukuro, Trauma-Informed Care Task Force, Dept. of Health, Child & Adolescent Mental Health Division (CAMHD)
- Laurie Tochiki, EPIC 'Ohana (co-chair)
- Paul Tonnessen, licensed resource caregiver, Friends of the Children's Justice Center of Maui
- Ka'ano'i Walk, Kamehameha Schools (designee)





**Figure 9:** Mālama 'Ohana Working Group Timeline. Graphic by One Shared Future, reformatted for the purposes of this report.

## MOWG Major Recommendations

More than 100 recommendations for system improvement were collected and are included in a report submitted to the 2025 Legislature with suggestions for transformative changes around policy, procedures, programming and legislation. The following are the high-level recommendations outlined further in the Mālama 'Ohana Working Group legislative report:

### **Recommendation 1: Address historical trauma and persistent disproportionality.**

Acknowledge and address historical and present conditions and barriers that perpetuate the overrepresentation of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Island people in categories of need or distress.

### **Recommendation 2: Build family resilience.**

Prioritize thriving families above all other commitments by providing universal family supports aimed at ensuring a stable foundation and opportunities for growth.

### **Recommendation 3: Provide comprehensive specialized support services.**

Provide accessible, trauma-responsive, specialized supports and interventions outside the child welfare system (CWS) for parents facing intense challenges.

### **Recommendation 4: Develop a trauma-informed system.**

When CWS intervenes in a family, ensure that the intervention is respectful and supportive, minimizes trauma, and does not create more harm than the original issue they hoped to address.

### **Recommendation 5: Build excellence through accountability.**

Ensure that systems, services, processes, and procedures are coordinated, accountable, and efficient with robust oversight, adequate funding, appropriate staffing, and high operational standards.

The Office of Wellness and Resilience is honored to be a part of this dedicated hui (group) of advocates, state agencies, community-based organizations and families to transform Hawai'i's child welfare system. The countless hours spent organizing, planning and implementing Act 86 will continue with as we work alongside CWS to address these recommendations in the coming years.



**Photo 28.** A gathering of the Mālama 'Ohana working group members and other community members who participated in an all-day meeting at WaiWai Collective in Mō'ili'ili, on O'ahu, in August.



**Photo 29.** Director Hartsock presents to the Federal Interagency Task Force for Trauma-Informed Care in Washington, D.C., in July.

### **On the National Level**

The *National Governors Association Youth Mental Health Policy Academy Hawai'i* team is chaired by the Governor's Office with the Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) as lead. See page 12 for more information on this effort. Director Hartsock also participates on several national initiatives and working groups related to trauma-informed care.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Office of Behavioral Health Equity (OBHE) invited Director Hartsock to serve on the **National Behavioral Health Equity Steering Committee** in 2023. She continued to be an active steering committee member this year. The purpose of this initiative is to support OBHE's vision that people from racial, ethnic, sexual and gender minority populations with or at-risk for mental health and substance use conditions receive quality care, thrive and achieve well-being.

The **Federal Interagency Task Force for Trauma-Informed Care** invites Director Hartsock to annual summits to assist in the development of a national framework for trauma-informed practices. Director Hartsock is part of a group of national trauma experts assisting this task force to foster ideas of ongoing work to expand trauma-informed approaches in communities and workplaces across the nation.

Director Hartsock was invited to participate on a Community Advisory Board for a National Institute of Health research project titled, **Population Health and Health System Resiliency Following Maui's Wildfire Disaster**. This research project was awarded funding from the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities of the National Institutes of Health. The project aims to garner needed data, perspectives, and lessons learned to better understand the immediate and long-term public health and system impact of the wildfires on the people of Maui and help inform services and interventions.



# Funding Initiatives & Partnerships

## Contracts, and Memorandums of Agreement (MOAs) & Understanding (MOUs)

The trauma-informed principle of *collaboration* is a value deeply rooted in the Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) approach to this work. Creating formal contracts and memorandums allows OWR to engage in departmental support, share resources, receive and provide training and technical assistance, and expand trauma-informed care across agencies.

### Established Contracts

#### SigBee (Dec. 27, 2023 – June 30, 2025)

- Contract established to utilize an online platform that promotes employee engagement and organizational health through building resilient organizations by collecting, processing, analyzing and routing meaningful signals generated by quick and easy daily employee check-ins.
- SigBee will be initially phased into the Maui wildfire disaster response effort and assist supervisors to better support state employees responding to the national disaster in Maui, followed by a statewide phase as an opt-in support to better organizational health.

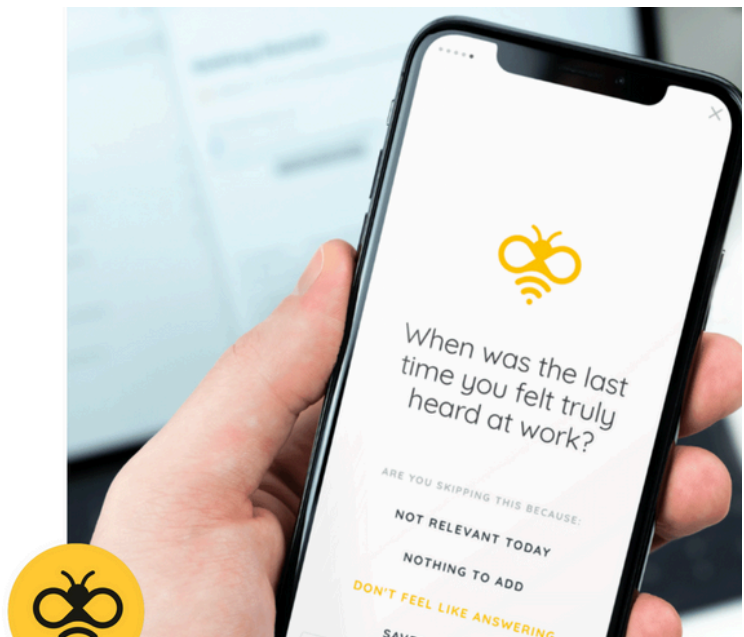
#### The Baker Center for Children and Families (Feb. 5, 2024 – Feb. 4, 2025)

- Contract established for implementation consultation and evaluation for the SigBee wellness app.

## Small check-ins. Big picture.

SigBee is an innovative platform that promotes employee engagement and organizational health. We help build resilient organizations by collecting, processing, analyzing and routing meaningful signals generated by quick and easy employee check-ins.

[Learn More](#)



**Photo 30:** Sample screenshot of the Sigbee app. Photo provided by [Sigbee](#).

## *Established Memorandums*

- MOA with the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's College of Social Sciences – Social Sciences Research Institute (May 1, 2023 – June 30, 2025)
  - Established to create social determinants of health data and survey development to inform and create dashboards with OWR.
- MOA with the University of Connecticut's Innovations Institute, School of Social Work (April 1, 2023 – June 30, 2025)
  - Established to receive federal technical assistance in national and local policy development, trauma-informed training and content-specific research.
- MOA with the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work and Public Health (May 16, 2023 – August 31, 2025)
  - Established to collect qualitative data on historical and intergenerational trauma through interviews and other methodologies. Analysis and brief to be developed.
- MOA with Hawai'i Department of Health's Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division (Aug. 1, 2023 to August 30, 2024)
  - Established to provide funds to create data dashboard and wellness app.
  - Funds Received: \$185,000 total received via federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grant funding to develop the dashboard platform
  - Funds Received: \$134,244 total received via federal SERG-SAMHSA emergency response grant to implement and evaluate wellness app to be used as a daily monitoring tool for Maui healthcare workers to monitor their ongoing well-being and burnout, with the goal of reducing vicarious trauma through ongoing monitoring and discussion in supervision.
- MOU with Hawai'i's Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (Jan. 1, 2024 to January 2, 2025)
  - Establishing to provide trauma-informed trainings, "train-the-trainer" model and technical assistance for correctional officers, new employee orientation, supervisors and other targeted trainings.

## **Memorandums in Development**

- MOA with University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's Research Corporation of University of Hawai'i (RCUH) Substance Use Professional Development Project
  - Establishing to develop and deliver training and provide technical assistance.



# **Training, Engagement & Communications**

## Trainings, Public Speaking & Engagements

Our Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) team members have been **featured as trainers, speakers and presenters at over a dozen major community events and conferences throughout the islands and beyond** this year, covering varied topics and reaching diverse audiences to discuss wellness, resilience, trauma and trauma-informed care.

As a team in total, OWR staff spoke at events, represented OWR and Governor Josh Green, M.D., and **met and engaged with constituents and residents representing nearly 100 state and county agencies, nonprofit organizations and community-based groups** in 2024.

Some of the major public speaking and engagements highlighted this year include:

- In February, Director Tia Hartsock participated in the Hawai'i Business Magazine's Stressed to Strong: Mental Health and Wellness Conference as a **panelist during the *Stressed to Strong: Managing Today's Diverse Workforce* session.**
- 'Ahahui o nā Kauka, the Association of Native Hawaiian Physicians, invited Director Hartsock and Keala Kaopuiki-Santos to **speak at a four-day climate resilience conference on Kaho'olawe re: our Maui response** work in May.
- Also in May, Director Hartsock gave **remarks at the Ola Pono O Kaua'i conference.** The conference theme was *Culture and Connection*.



**Photo 31.** Above, Director Tia Hartsock presenting at the Peer Workshop in August.

**Photo 32.** Below, Dr. Susan Asam, Emily Makini and Director Hartsock present on Kaho'olawe at 'Ahahui o nā Kauka's Climate Resilience Conference in May.



- During the summer, our Hilo-based project manager Kev Thompson, Ph.D., and Director Hartsock created and recorded a **series of mini-trainings** on trauma-informed care, specifically **tailored for the healthcare community**, for the Healthcare Association of Hawai'i.
- Kev Thompson, Ph.D., also led multiple **trainings regarding vicarious trauma, self-care and trauma-informed care for the Hawai'i Government Employees Association's** (HGEA) Leadership Seminar in June, and Summer Mental Health Series from June through August.
- Alongside Governor Green's Senior Advisor on Mental Health, Dr. Michael Champion, Director Hartsock presented on the **importance of peer support** in trauma-informed care at the Peer Workshop in August to 115 individuals with lived experience and expertise in our state systems, consumers of mental health services who are interested in becoming peer support specialists, and existing peer specialists.
- Also in August, project manager Naomi Leipold **facilitated a panel of peer specialists** titled *Healing Through Trauma-Informed Care: Elevating the Role of Peer Support in Our Systems* at a conference hosted by the Lotus Project.
- Director Hartsock traveled to Washington, D.C., in July to present to the federal **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration's Interagency Task Force on Trauma-Informed Care** on Hawai'i's work around trauma in state systems.
- Hawai'i/Pacific Basin Area Health Education Center (AHEC) invited Director Hartsock to participate on a panel regarding trauma-informed care and practices at their annual **Hawai'i Health Workforce Summit** in September.
- Hawai'i AARP held an October *She's the Difference* luncheon hosted by First Lady Jaime Kanani Green, with Director Hartsock on a **panel re: women's wellness**.
- At the end of October, the OWR team traveled to Minneapolis, Minn., to present with the Maui Wildfire Exposure Study (MauiWES) team from the University of Hawai'i at the **American Public Health Association's annual conference** during a symposium entitled *Trauma-Informed Approaches to Understanding Wellness and Resilience in Hawai'i Following the Maui Wildfires*.



**Photo 33.** Members of the OWR and MauiWES teams present at the American Public Health Association's annual conference in October.



## News & Media

Highlights of our news appearances and media relations efforts this year include:

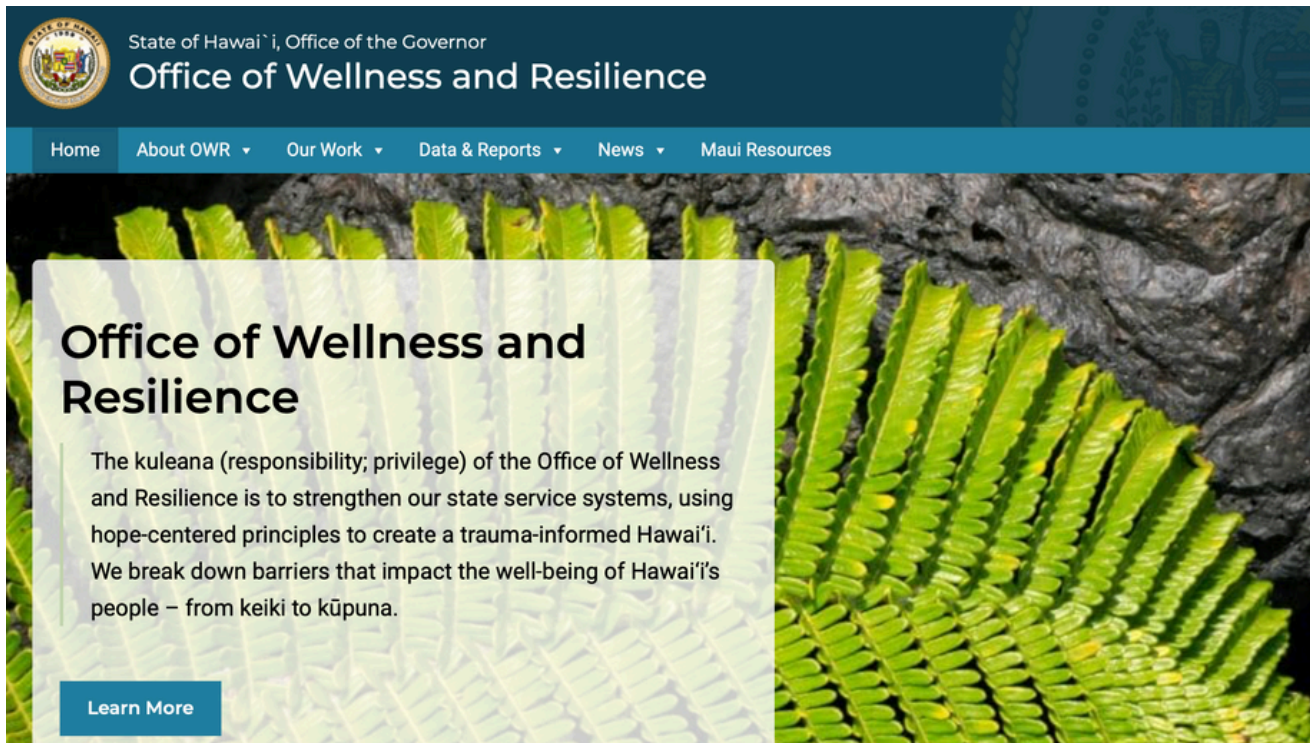
- In February, we hosted a **news conference and reception** featuring Governor Josh Green, M.D., as well as our partners from the Depts. of Health and Human Resources Development, on **Governor Green’s executive order on making Hawai’i a trauma-informed state**, resulting in statewide news coverage.
- **PBS Hawai’i** invited Director Tia Hartsock to speak at their **Kākou Town Hall** live TV event on the topic of *De-Stressing in a Stressful World* with other community members to discuss workplace stress in April.
- Also in April, Director Hartsock was a featured guest on trauma-informed care and Governor Green’s executive order on **Hawai’i News Now’s Spotlight NOW**.
- We co-hosted a series of events for both media and the community in early December to **celebrate the launch of the Hawai’i Quality of Life and Well-Being Dashboard**, including a **news conference** attended by all major statewide media and resulting in news coverage on every major island, from **Hawai’i Public Radio to front-page, “above the fold” story in the Honolulu Star-Advertiser** and stories on Maui NOW, Kaua’i NOW and Big Island NOW.
- **NBC News** interviewed Director Hartsock for a national story on Maui mental health response efforts in November.
- We also worked on numerous stories with media related to our ongoing work on Maui and policy priorities, including Mālama ‘Ohana.

## Interim Session Events

We held two events during the “interim” period between legislative sessions for Capitol staff and the community. The first was held on Aug. 27 to debrief the legislative session and discuss possible 2025 priorities, including recommendations of the Mālama ‘Ohana Working Group (below). On Dec. 11, we also co-hosted a Data & Dessert event with our partners at the University of Hawai’i, celebrating the launch of the Hawai’i Quality of Life & Workplace Wellness Dashboard featuring the results of the statewide survey.



**Photo 34.** Our Maui-based project manager, Keala Kaopuiki-Santos, presents updates from the Mālama ‘Ohana Working Group.



**Photo 35.** Screenshot of the new OWR website homepage.

## Newsletter

The Office released six editions of our newsletter this year (January, March, May, July, September and November) in keeping with our bi-monthly cadence. It is emailed to the Governor's Office's full staff, the Lieutenant Governor's office and all legislators, all state public information officers and/or communications leads, as well as to our opt-in newsletter distribution list.

All editions are available both digitally and in print. Anyone may request to join our newsletter list by emailing us at [gov.owr@hawaii.gov](mailto:gov.owr@hawaii.gov) with the subject line <Newsletter>. Printed copies are distributed to every office in the Capitol, and are available in the Office of the Governor on both the fifth floor and fourth floor of the State Capitol in Room 415. All 2024 newsletters are attached as Appendices.

## New Website Launch

The Office of Wellness and Resilience's (OWR) standalone site launched in May 2024 at [owr.hawaii.gov](http://owr.hawaii.gov), and our webpage on the Office of the Governor's site was retired. Since then, we have had more than 2,300 unique visitors to the site, and this spiked when we were hiring for our six new positions during the late summer and early fall. We have plans to make the site more robust in 2025, including creating a blog-like Journal feature with more timely photos and information on OWR happenings that may not make it into the bimonthly newsletter.



## Other OWR Team Highlights

- In January, the **Hawai'i Psychological Association** (HPA) honored Director Tia Hartsock as its **2023 Daniel K. Inouye Award** recipient at their annual luncheon. In the summer, Tia also received recognition from Mental Health America Hawai'i as an **Outstanding Government Leader at their 2024 Mental Health Awareness & Awards Celebration** (below photo).
- Director Hartsock co-authored an article published in the Journal of Behavioral Health Services & Research in early 2024, regarding the Hawai'i Department of Health Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division's longstanding partnership with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to enhance quality of community-based youth mental health services. The article is titled: **30 Years of Youth System of Care Lessons Learned – Hawai'i's Partnership with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration**. *Journal of Behavioral Health Services & Research*. Kelsie H. Okamura; David Jackson; Danielle L. Carreira Ching; Da Eun Suh; Tia L. R. Hartsock; Puanani J. Hee; Scott K. Shimabukuro.
- Kev Thompson, Ph.D., our Hilo-based project manager, is now a **SAMHSA-certified GAINS Center trainer** in trauma-informed care.
- Jodie L.H. Burgess, our procurement and contracts specialist, was selected to participate in the **'Ōiwi Leadership Accelerator**, a six-month leadership development program designed to elevate Hawai'i-centric and 'Ōiwi-driven leadership within Hawai'i's local workforce.
- Erica Yamauchi, our director of communications and engagement, was honored with the Public Relations Society of America Hawai'i Chapter's 2024 **President's Leadership Award** for her work that has made significant contributions to the success of the communications profession in Hawai'i.



**Photo 36.** From left to right: Jodie Burgess, procurement and contracts specialist; Erica Yamauchi, director of communications and engagement; Tia Hartsock, director; Naomi Leipold, project manager; Kev Thompson, project manager; Keala Kaopuiki-Santos, project manager

# Appendices



# Appendix A



**GOV. MSG. NO. 1189**

EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA

June 27, 2024

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi  
President of the Senate,  
and Members of the Senate  
Thirty-Second State Legislature  
State Capitol, Room 409  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

The Honorable Scott K. Saiki  
Speaker, and Members of the  
House of Representatives  
Thirty-Second State Legislature  
State Capitol, Room 431  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

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

This is to inform you that on June 27, 2024, the following bill was signed into law:

SB3094 SD2 HD2 CD1

RELATING TO PEER SUPPORT  
SPECIALISTS.  
**ACT 088**

Sincerely,

Josh Green, M.D.  
Governor, State of Hawai'i

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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO PEER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the federal Centers  
2 for Medicare and Medicaid Services recognizes that the  
3 experiences of peer support specialists, as part of an  
4 evidence-based model of care, can be an important component in  
5 the delivery of effective mental and behavioral health  
6 treatment.

7           The legislature further finds that the federal Substance  
8 Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration identifies peer  
9 support as one of the six guiding principles of trauma-informed  
10 care. Peer support specialists use strengths-based approaches  
11 that emphasize physical, psychological, and emotional safety and  
12 create opportunities to rebuild a sense of control and  
13 empowerment.

14           The legislature additionally finds that research shows that  
15 peer support is effective for improving behavioral health  
16 outcomes. Benefits of peer support include reduced hospital  
17 admission rates, longer community tenure, increased social  
18 support and social functioning, decreased substance use and



1 depression, raised empowerment scores, and increased engagement  
2 in self-care and wellness.

3       The legislature also finds that peer support provides  
4 benefits not only to individuals suffering from mental health  
5 disorders and substance use disorders, but also to individuals  
6 who are experiencing homelessness, involved in the child welfare  
7 system, survivors and responders of disasters, involved in the  
8 correctional and juvenile justice systems, and caregivers of  
9 youth involved in one or more child-serving systems.

10       The legislature also finds that Act 291, Session Laws of  
11 Hawaii 2022, established on a temporary basis the office of  
12 wellness and resilience within the office of the governor. The  
13 office of wellness and resilience was established to address the  
14 various barriers that impact the physical, social, and emotional  
15 well-being of all people in the State by building wellness and  
16 resilience through trauma-informed, strength-based strategies  
17 and to support state departments and agencies in their  
18 individual efforts to address trauma-informed care and move  
19 toward a collaborative, shared purpose of collective system  
20 reform.





1           The legislature finds that establishing a working group  
2 within the office of wellness and resilience that comprises  
3 state departments and agencies that engage with peer support  
4 specialists; community-based organizations; contracted service  
5 providers; and adults, youth, parents, and caregivers with lived  
6 experiences will contribute to the development of a framework  
7 that elevates the role of peer support specialists and enhances  
8 their ability to serve individuals in need.

9           The purpose of this Act is to:

- 10           (1) Establish a temporary peer support specialist working  
11 group to develop and make recommendations for a  
12 framework for peer support specialists in the State;  
13 and  
14           (2) Require the working group to submit a report of its  
15 findings and recommendations to the legislature before  
16 the regular session of 2025.

17           SECTION 2. (a) There is established within the office of  
18 wellness and resilience for administrative purposes a peer  
19 support specialist working group. The working group shall  
20 consist of the following members:



- 1           (1) The director of the office of wellness and resilience,  
2                    or the director's designee, who shall serve as the  
3                    chairperson of the working group;
- 4           (2) The director of health, or the director's designee;
- 5           (3) The superintendent of education, or the  
6                    superintendent's designee;
- 7           (4) The director of law enforcement, or the director's  
8                    designee;
- 9           (5) A member of the Hawaii state judiciary, to be  
10                  appointed by the chief justice;
- 11          (6) A member of the department of health's adult mental  
12                  health division representing the administrator of the  
13                  Hawaii certified peer specialist program;
- 14          (7) A member of the department of health's child and  
15                  adolescent mental health division representing the  
16                  administrator of the peer support specialist program  
17                  carried out within the division;
- 18          (8) The administrator of med-QUEST, or the administrator's  
19                  designee;
- 20          (9) The governor's coordinator on homelessness, or the  
21                  coordinator's designee;



- 1           (10) Two members of the nonprofit sector, who shall be
- 2                   invited by the chairperson; and
- 3           (11) A member from each of the following constituencies,
- 4                   whom the chairperson shall invite to participate in
- 5                   the working group;
- 6                   (A) An individual with lived experience as a child or
- 7                               youth in the child welfare system;
- 8                   (B) An individual with lived experience in the
- 9                               juvenile justice system or an individual with
- 10                              lived experience in the adult correctional
- 11                              system;
- 12                   (C) Two caregivers with lived experience as the
- 13                              caregiver of a child or youth in the behavioral
- 14                              health, child welfare, or juvenile justice
- 15                              systems;
- 16                   (D) An individual with lived experience with recovery
- 17                              from substance abuse and lived experience being
- 18                              homeless; and
- 19                   (E) An individual with lived experience navigating
- 20                              the mental health system either as a child or
- 21                              youth or as an adult.



1 (b) The working group shall develop and make  
2 recommendations for a framework for peer support specialists in  
3 the State. The working group shall:

4 (1) Identify best practices and create, develop, and adopt  
5 a statewide framework for peer support specialists.

6 The framework shall include:

7 (A) Clear roles and definitions of peer support  
8 specialists, youth peer support specialists,  
9 adult peer support specialists, and caregiver  
10 peer support specialists;

11 (B) Ethics, values, and standards required of peer  
12 support specialists;

13 (C) Recommendations on whether the State should  
14 require youth peer support specialists, adult  
15 peer support specialists, and caregiver peer  
16 support specialists to undertake the same  
17 training, certification, and credentialing  
18 process or whether the training should be  
19 individualized based on the type of peer support;

20 (D) Recommendations on how to require peer support  
21 specialists in state-awarded contracts; and





- 1 (E) An implementation and quality improvement plan,  
2 consisting of an evaluation plan with coordinated  
3 data collection and suggested metrics for  
4 assessing ongoing progress of the framework;
- 5 (2) Identify a trauma-informed model of supervision of  
6 peer support specialists to support competent and  
7 ethical delivery of services that support continued  
8 development of peer support specialist abilities and  
9 support navigation of state systems, including the  
10 certification and credentialing process, integration  
11 in decision making and program development processes,  
12 debriefing from meetings, training and technical  
13 assistance, and programs to support the well-being of  
14 peer support specialists;
- 15 (3) Provide an inventory of current use of peer support  
16 specialists within and across public and private  
17 agencies and departments; and
- 18 (4) Develop a sustainability plan that includes  
19 identification of federal and state funding streams to  
20 incorporate requirements to establish peer support as  
21 a medicaid billable service.



1 (c) Members of the peer support specialist working group  
2 who are employed by the State and serving in their official  
3 capacity on the working group shall serve without compensation.  
4 Other members of the working group who are not employed by the  
5 State shall receive compensation for their travel expenses.

6 (d) The office of wellness and resilience may contract  
7 with an administrative facilitator to provide necessary support  
8 for the peer support specialist working group in carrying out  
9 its duties.

10 (e) The peer support specialist working group shall submit  
11 a report of its findings and recommendations, including any  
12 proposed legislation, to the legislature no later than twenty  
13 days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2025.


14 (f) The peer support specialist working group shall cease  
15 to exist on June 30, 2025.

16 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2024.



S.B. NO. 3094  
S.D. 2  
H.D. 2  
C.D. 1

APPROVED this **27th** day of **June**, 2024




GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF HAWAII

**THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF HAWAI'I**

Date: May 1, 2024  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

We hereby certify that the foregoing Bill this day passed Final Reading in the Senate of the Thirty-Second Legislature of the State of Hawai'i, Regular Session of 2024.

  
President of the Senate

  
Clerk of the Senate



SB No. 3094, SD 2, HD 2, CD 1

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF HAWAII

Date: May 1, 2024

Honolulu, Hawaii

We hereby certify that the above-referenced Bill on this day passed Final Reading in the House of Representatives of the Thirty-Second Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2024.

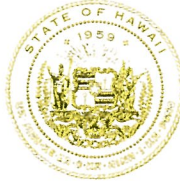


Scott K. Saiki  
Speaker  
House of Representatives



Brian L. Takeshita  
Chief Clerk  
House of Representatives

# Appendix B



**GOV. MSG. NO. 1207**

EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA

June 27, 2024

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi  
President of the Senate,  
and Members of the Senate  
Thirty-Second State Legislature  
State Capitol, Room 409  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

The Honorable Scott K. Saiki  
Speaker, and Members of the  
House of Representatives  
Thirty-Second State Legislature  
State Capitol, Room 431  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

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

This is to inform you that on June 27, 2024, the following bill was signed into law:

SB3279 SD1 HD2 CD1

RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH.  
**ACT 106**

Sincerely,

Josh Green, M.D.  
Governor, State of Hawai'i

on JUN 27 2024

THE SENATE  
THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE, 2024  
STATE OF HAWAII

S.B. NO. 3279  
S.D. 1  
H.D. 2  
C.D. 1

# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that research on health  
2 and safety reveals that mental illness is one of the most  
3 pressing challenges humanity is facing today. The prevalence of  
4 both acute and chronic mental illnesses has been on the rise in  
5 the State and globally over the past two decades. Untreated  
6 mental illness is one of the top predictors of suicide,  
7 substance abuse, incarceration, and adult disability. This is  
8 especially concerning for historically marginalized and  
9 under-resourced communities, which are at significantly higher  
10 risk of mental illness and also have more limited access to  
11 mental health education, resources, and support. Mental illness  
12 at the individual level compounds across communities and leads  
13 to negative statewide outcomes, including increased joblessness,  
14 homelessness, domestic violence, violent crime, and school  
15 dropout rates.

16 The legislature further finds that research conducted over  
17 the past fifty years in the fields of psychology, public health,  
18 neuroscience, and organizational development demonstrate the





1 critical importance of a tiered approach to comprehensively  
2 address statewide mental health concerns and provide every  
3 individual with the skills and resources they need to take care  
4 of themselves, their families, and their broader ecosystems.  
5 Tier 1 mental health support services provide skills training,  
6 curricula, and programming to all stakeholders of an  
7 organization such as schools, community centers, police and fire  
8 departments, medical institutions, and other first responder  
9 facilities. Tier 1 mental health support services provide a  
10 common vocabulary and set of wellness practices that members of  
11 the organization collectively share to promote a safe and  
12 healthy organizational culture for everyone. Tier 2 mental  
13 health support services recognize that certain populations  
14 within an organization may be at higher risk for certain mental  
15 illnesses than others, and so these groups require specialized  
16 training, support, and skill-building that is culturally  
17 contextualized to best support the specific needs of the high-  
18 risk group. Tier 2 mental health support services therefore  
19 exist to provide additional specialized group support  
20 interventions. Taken together, these tiers of mental health



1 support services cover the core mental health needs of  
2 individuals, groups, organizations, and communities.

3 The legislature further finds that a comprehensive system  
4 of mental health support services on a statewide level requires  
5 the seamless integration of tier 1 and tier 2 mental health  
6 support services. Tier 1 mental health support services benefit  
7 public institutions through whole-organization tier 1 mental  
8 health support training for students, school staff,  
9 firefighters, police officers, medical staff, and other first  
10 responder groups. Higher risk groups within each of these  
11 organizations benefit from tier 2 mental health support services  
12 that use culturally responsive approaches. Overall, mentally  
13 well individuals create safe and healthy communities, which  
14 further promote a safe and healthy state for all citizens.

15 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to:

16 (1) Establish the state of well-being project and a  
17 timeline for the project to:

18 (A) Assess current tiers of mental health support  
19 services; and

20 (B) Enhance existing well-being programming and, when  
21 non-existent, build out culturally grounded and



1 community-informed well-being programming to  
2 establish mental health support services for key  
3 stakeholder communities across the State; and

4 (2) Appropriate funds for mental health specialist  
5 positions within the office of wellness and  
6 resilience.

7 SECTION 2. Chapter 27, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended  
8 by adding a new section to part IX to be appropriately  
9 designated and to read as follows:

10 "§27- State of well-being project; established. (a)

11 There is established within the office the state of well-being  
12 project to assess and enhance tier 1 and tier 2 mental health  
13 support services for key stakeholder communities across the  
14 State. The project shall:

15 (1) Assess and enhance existing tier 1 and tier 2 mental  
16 health training and ongoing support services to public  
17 schools, public community centers, first responder  
18 groups, police departments, fire departments,  
19 hospitals, and medical staff and, when non-existent,  
20 build out culturally grounded and community-informed  
21 well-being programming;



- 1        (2) Track and measure aggregate mental health trends
- 2        across all populations served by the project; and
- 3        (3) Hire and train mental health specialists and work with
- 4        approved partner organizations identified by the
- 5        office to lead project execution across tier 1 and
- 6        tier 2 mental health support services in each key
- 7        stakeholder community.

8        (b) The office shall administer the state of well-being  
9 project in accordance with the following timeline:

- 10       (1) Beginning in 2024, initiate a landscape assessment of
- 11       existing tier 1 and tier 2 mental health support
- 12       services by December 31, 2025; and

- 13       (2) Beginning in 2025, initiate the enhancement of
- 14       existing tier 1 and tier 2 mental health support
- 15       services and, when non-existent, build out culturally
- 16       grounded and community-informed well-being
- 17       programming, with statewide implementation to be
- 18       achieved by December 31, 2027.

19       (c) For the purposes of this section:





1       "Tier 1 mental health support" means well-being service  
2 provisions that are aimed at the entire system and population  
3 within an organization.

4       "Tier 2 mental health support" means well-being service  
5 provisions that are aimed at populations within an organization  
6 that are at higher risk of mental health challenges."

7       SECTION 3. Chapter 346, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
8 amended by adding a new section to part XXI to be appropriately  
9 designated and to read as follows:

10       "§346-     State of well-being project; established. (a)

11 There is established within the office the state of well-being  
12 project to assess and enhance tier 1 and tier 2 mental health  
13 support services for key stakeholder communities across the  
14 State. The project shall:

15       (1) Assess and enhance existing tier 1 and tier 2 mental  
16 health support training and ongoing support services  
17 to public schools, public community centers, first  
18 responder groups, police departments, fire  
19 departments, hospitals, and medical staff and, when  
20 non-existent, build out culturally grounded and  
21 community-informed well-being programming;



1        (2) Track and measure aggregate mental health trends  
2        across all populations served by the project; and

3        (3) Hire and train mental health specialists and work with  
4        approved partner organizations identified by the  
5        office to lead project execution across tier 1 and  
6        tier 2 mental health support services in each key  
7        stakeholder community.

8        (b) The office shall administer the state of well-being  
9        project in accordance with the following timeline:

10       (1) Beginning in 2024, initiate a landscape assessment of  
11       existing tier 1 and tier 2 mental health support  
12       services by December 31, 2025; and

13       (2) Beginning in 2025, initiate the enhancement of  
14       existing tier 1 and tier 2 mental health support  
15       services and, when non-existent, build out culturally  
16       grounded and community-informed well-being  
17       programming, with statewide implementation to be  
18       achieved by December 31, 2027.

19       (c) For the purposes of this section:



1       "Tier 1 mental health support" means well-being service  
2 provisions that are aimed at the entire system and population  
3 within an organization.

4       "Tier 2 mental health support" means well-being service  
5 provisions that are aimed at populations within an organization  
6 that are at higher risk of mental health challenges."

7       SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general  
8 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$876,000 or so much  
9 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2024-2025 for the  
10 establishment and implementation of the state of well-being  
11 project, to be expended as follows:

12       (1) \$475,000 to establish six full-time equivalent (6.0  
13 FTE) mental health specialist positions within the  
14 office of wellness and resilience; and

15       (2) \$401,000 for the office of wellness and resilience to  
16 implement this Act.

17       The sum appropriated shall be expended by the office of  
18 wellness and resilience for the purposes of this Act.

19       SECTION 5. New statutory material is underscored.

20       SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2024;  
21 provided that:



- 1           (1) Section 2 of this Act shall be repealed on June 30,  
2                           2025; and  
3           (2) Section 3 of this Act shall take effect on July 1,  
4                           2025.



S.B. NO. 3279  
S.D. 1  
H.D. 2  
C.D. 1

APPROVED this **27th** day of **June**, 2024



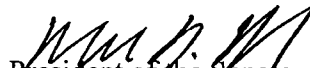
GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF HAWAII

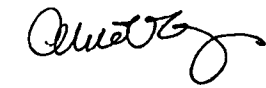


**THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF HAWAI'I**

Date: May 1, 2024  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

We hereby certify that the foregoing Bill this day passed Final Reading in the Senate of the Thirty-Second Legislature of the State of Hawai'i, Regular Session of 2024.

  
President of the Senate

  
Clerk of the Senate

SB No. 3279, SD 1, HD 2, CD 1

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF HAWAII

Date: May 1, 2024  
Honolulu, Hawaii

We hereby certify that the above-referenced Bill on this day passed Final Reading in the House of Representatives of the Thirty-Second Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2024.

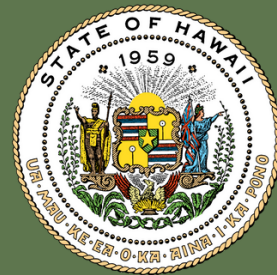


Scott K. Saiki  
Speaker  
House of Representatives



Brian L. Takeshita  
Chief Clerk  
House of Representatives

# Appendix C



Above photo, from left to right: Erica Yamauchi, director of communications and engagement; Keala Kaopuiki-Santos, project manager; Jodie Burgess, executive administrative assistant; Rachel Aquino, graduate research assistant; Naomi Leipold, project manager; Kevin Thompson, project manager; Shugufa Basij-Rasikh, graduate research assistant

## Opening Day

It was fun to see so many of you at our table on the fourth floor in front of our offices in the Office of the Governor. We met lots of active community members, and enjoyed introducing them to the work of our Office. Mahalo to all our new friends who stopped by to talk story, and signed up for our mailing list!



## Lahaina Unity

Above, Gov. Josh Green, M.D., with Hui Ho'omalulu members, who have volunteered countless hours at the weekend wellness events held at hotel shelters. Gov. Green and Keala attended the Ho'ulu Unity Gathering held on Jan. 23. Thousands of supporters gathered in support of the residents' recovery.



## Maui Updates

Keala, our Maui-based project manager, facilitated a session on Native Hawaiian healing approaches to restore mana and revive health and well-being at the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement's convention on Maui in November.

We continue to help coordinate weekend wellness events in partnership with Kamehameha Schools, Hui Ho'omalulu and Laukanaka, and hope to announce a few promising updates soon related the long-term response.

For more information about our weekly Maui coordinated mental health response meetings, email us at [gov.owr@hawaii.gov](mailto:gov.owr@hawaii.gov).



## About the Office of Wellness and Resilience

Our goal is to strengthen our state systems and services through collective reform, using trauma-informed care principles as strategies to make Hawai'i a trauma-informed state. We break down the barriers that impact the physical, social and emotional well-being of Hawai'i's people - from keiki to kūpuna.



# Director's Message



Tia L. R. Hartsock,  
Director

Happy New Year!

A new year marks a renewed commitment to our purpose, our intentions, our values. I love the energy and momentum that the month of January brings with the new year beginning, as well as a new legislative season with Opening Day here at the Capitol.

We're excited to have our first bill - proposing a peer specialist working group - in the Governor's legislative package, and are looking forward to supporting trauma-informed and healing-centered bills this session.

Naomi, our policy lead, would love to connect on proposed bills and policy that align with our mission. Email us to talk story!

Before we close out 2023 though, we want to make sure you know about our annual report, which is on our website: [governor.hawaii.gov](https://governor.hawaii.gov). It was a rejuvenating exercise to go through the last year to document and reflect on all we've been able to accomplish as a team and a community - with your support!

We're so hopeful for this year. Wishing you and your families health and happiness in 2024.

Mālama pono,

*Tia*

## Policy Updates

The Breakthrough Therapies Task Force, which has jump-started the state conversation around innovative trauma treatments (namely psilocybin), held its public webinar in late November to share their progress, and will soon finish its work by distributing information about current research and lessons learned from other states to help inform this year's legislature.

The Mālama 'Ohana Working Group (Act 86), which is tasked with making needed reforms to our child welfare system alongside families with lived experience and expertise, recently had their fifth meeting. The group will now meet monthly through Nov. 2024, and is currently planning their community listening sessions.

Our bill proposing a working group to expand peer support in our state systems (HB2405), a key principle of trauma-informed care, was introduced as part of the Governor's package. Peer support workers provide non-clinical, strengths-based support to others experiencing similar challenges, and are an important source of hope for trauma survivors.

## OWR, Director Hartsock Honored with HPA Award

Our Office was honored to be recognized for our mental health response work on Maui by the Hawai'i Psychological Association (HPA) at a luncheon on Jan. 19. Tia was named as their 2023 Daniel K. Inouye Award recipient, however, she wasn't able to attend the event due to a family wellness trip. Our Maui response lead, Keala, accepted the award on her behalf and was joined by the rest of our team. The cover photo and below photo are from the event.

Third and fourth from left: Dr. Trina Orimoto and Dr. Diane Logan of HPA



This newsletter is a publication of the Office of Wellness & Resilience, within the Office of Governor Josh Green, M.D.

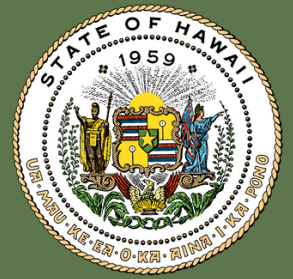
Let's talk story!

 (808) 586-0805

 [gov.owr@hawaii.gov](mailto:gov.owr@hawaii.gov)

 [governor.hawaii.gov](https://governor.hawaii.gov)





Above: Attendees from the Office of Wellness and Resilience, the Trauma-Informed Care Task Force and trauma-informed movement gathered to celebrate Governor Josh Green, M.D., declaring Hawai'i a trauma-informed state on Feb. 20, 2024.

## Wellness Survey

In partnership with the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, OWR filmed a video (below) to promote our statewide survey on workplace wellness and quality of life, with a special focus on state workers. Results will inform future policy and programs. Hawai'i residents ages 18+ are eligible; it takes ~15 minutes to complete. To take the survey, visit: [health-study.com](https://health-study.com).



## Maui Convening

During our Maui convening gathering (above), we also took some time at the end of the day for wellness activities, including lomilomi (Hawaiian: massage), shinrin-yoku (Japanese: forest nature walks) and yoga. It was the first in-person group meeting since meeting daily and now weekly via Zoom to help coordinate the disaster mental health response.

## Maui Updates

OWR convened about 80 people from 45 organizations at University of Hawai'i Maui College (UHMC) on March 6 (below) to debrief the first six months of the mental health response, as well as plan for the long term. We plan to share a findings report and framework to inform future disaster response efforts here in Hawai'i and in other communities. Mahalo to Kamehameha Schools for facilitation support and UHMC's Chancellor Lui Hokoana for hosting us!

In partnership with community providers, we are also excited to announce a new space at the Royal Lahaina Resort to provide mental health and wellness activities.



## About the Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR)

Our goal is to strengthen our state systems and services, using healing-centered principles as strategies to make Hawai'i a trauma-informed state. We break down the barriers that impact the physical, social and emotional well-being of Hawai'i's people - from keiki to kūpuna.



# Director's Message



Tia L. R. Hartsock,  
Director

February 20th was a milestone day for our Office – Gov. Green signed an executive order, declaring Hawai'i a trauma-informed state! It's something we've been working towards for more than 10 years in the trauma-informed movement in Hawai'i, and it was a bit surreal to see come to life. We're excited to start engaging more deeply with state departments on their staff wellness and resilience goals.

It's been a busy legislative session, and we have testified on trauma-informed and healing-centered bills as diverse as medical debt relief and psychedelic therapies, and from wellness programs for first responders to paid family leave. The one thing they have in common is that they all have the potential to support our state workforce, communities and families in our resilience. We're thrilled to see our peer support bill is still moving (HB2405). Mahalo nui loa to everyone who has supported the bill through both in-person and written testimony!

Lastly, make sure to take our statewide workplace wellness and quality of life survey at [health-study.com](https://health-study.com). We have 7,000+ responses so far, making it one of the largest statewide surveys on health and wellness ever, but we need your voice too – it will make a difference in future state policy and community programming. Please share with your network!

Mālama pono,

*Tia*

## Legislative Updates

The 2024 legislative session kicked off in late January, and lots has happened since then! While we have supported a number of bills this year, only a few of our priority bills remain active.

Our primary priority bill (HB2405) proposing a OWR-convened working group to expand peer support in our state systems, a key principle of trauma-informed care, was introduced as part of the Governor's package. Peer support workers provide non-clinical, strengths-based support to others experiencing similar challenges, and are an important source of hope for trauma survivors.

Our two other priority bills that are still moving are SB3094, which would establish the State of Well-Being project within OWR to assess and enhance statewide mental health support services; and SB2305, which would establish a Silver Alert Program within the Dept. of Law Enforcement to help locate and safeguard missing kūpuna, ages 65+ who may be cognitively impaired and/or disabled.


## Executive Order: Hawai'i is a trauma-informed state!

The Office held a news conference and reception in late February to celebrate Gov. Josh Green signing an [Executive Order](#) which invites state departments to collaborate with OWR to integrate trauma-informed care principles like safety, transparency and collaboration, and build resilience in our communities and state workforce. The cover and below photos are from the event. Right to left: Dr. Scott Shimabukuro (CAMHD-DOH), Major Mike Lambert (Honolulu Police Dept.), Dr. Jillian Freitas (UH-JABSOM) and Dr. Evan Beachy (Kamehameha Schools).



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From left to right: Jodie Burgess, executive administrative assistant; Erica Yamauchi, director of communications and engagement; Tia Hartsock, director; Naomi Leipold, project manager; Kev Thompson, project manager; Keala Kaopuiki-Santos, project manager

## Staff Celebrations

- Tia received recognition from Mental Health America Hawai'i as an Outstanding Government Leader at their 2024 Mental Health Awareness & Awards Celebration (above photo).
- Kev, our Hilo-based project manager, is now a SAMHSA-certified GAINS Center trainer.
- Our graduate research assistant, Shugufa Basij-Rasikh, earned her Ph.D. in public health. Her dissertation focused on Afghan refugee mental health (below).



## Lending Library Launch

In celebration of Mental Health Month, we're launching the OWR Lending Library of books on wellness, resilience and mental well-being! Swing by the 4th Floor Governor's Office and/or email us to schedule time to check out our collection for both adults and keiki, including Breathe Like A Bear, What Happened to You?, What My Bones Know, The Body Keeps The Score and The Deepest Well.



## Maui Updates

In partnership with the Dept. of Health and statewide service providers, we are helping to coordinate mental health and wellness activities for survivors at the Royal Lahaina Resort. Activities include lomilomi and kūkākūkā with Hui Ho'omalua and Laukanaka, 'ukulele lessons with the Kanikapila Project, arts and crafts with EPIC 'Ohana and the Dept. of Education's Office of Student Support Services, and individual and group therapy and workshops.

Disaster case managers with the Dept. of Human Services will also soon have access to SigBee, an innovative (yet optional) app that provides updates on workforce wellness, connection, job confidence and resilience.



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# Director's Message - Climate, Trauma & Healing: Lessons from Kaho'olawe



Tia L. R. Hartsock,  
Director

In April, I was honored to be invited to attend a huaka'i (voyage) to Kaho'olawe by the 'Ahahui o nā Kauka (Association of Native Hawaiian Physicians). I was invited to share the impacts of natural disasters on mental health, and specifically, OWR's response to the Maui wildfires. All that I learned from this huaka'i can never be fully put into words. However, reflecting on my five-day experience with the Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana and the kauka, here are a few lessons learned from this place – a place that has experienced so much trauma and yet continues to light a pathway for future generations.

**Resilience & Healing** – against all odds, this island thrives. The true essence of resilience is in the wisdom and healing this place holds. To know true resilience is to stand on this 'āina (land), to know the people, or kahu o ka 'āina, who have dedicated their lives to the healing and revitalization effort, the mo'olelo embedded in the cultural practices and rebuilding the knowledge that once flowed freely.

**Ceremony, Kilo & Intentional Labor** – the importance of moving through our daily lives with intention, observation and humility is critical to being present. Presence is the best gift we can give each other. Understanding the importance of the present needs to be informed by lessons from the past and provides hope for the future.

**Distractions** – disconnection from the noise of our modern-day lives and its constant information flowing at and into us is the only way to really connect. When we remove the noise, we finally hear what needs to be heard, see what needs to be seen and learn what is waiting to be taught in this life. This time allowed me to savor moments like watching butterflies dancing in the koa trees, listening to the waves greeting the shore at sunrise and watching the stars share their stories in the night sky. Now that I'm home, it can be simply scheduling time during the day to sit alone outdoors in nature to reset mind and body, or connecting with a loved one for five minutes first thing in the morning and/or before bed.



*Dr. Susan Asam, Emily Makini and Tia Hartsock present about climate and resiliency during the 'Ahahui o nā Kauka gathering on Kaho'olawe*

When I returned home and watched the red dirt run off, I immediately longed to return to this place, where I was reminded that there is a different way to live—and I have choices in how I spend my time and what I give my attention to.

My sore muscles healed, but my heart is forever imprinted by this 'āina. As our kua (guide) so wisely shared: "You may leave Kaho'olawe, but Kaho'olawe will never leave you." What an honor to be touched by this place, and share space and time with those who have been stewards of Kanaloa's healing for generations.

Mahalo nui loa to the Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana, Kim Ku'ulei Birney, Dr. Marcus Iwane, Dr. Davianna McGregor, Craig Neff, the kua, the kauka, and of course, Dr. Emmett Aluli, for sharing your 'ike (knowledge) yesterday, today and tomorrow.

Eō Kanaloa!

*Tia*



## Mālama 'Ohana Community Meetings Announced

Eleven listening sessions (below) will be held in person and virtually beginning at the end of May, with a culminating virtual statewide meeting on Tuesday, July 2. For more information and to register, visit [malamaohana.net](http://malamaohana.net).

- May 29, 5:30-8 p.m., Kalaniho'okaha Learning Center, Wai'anae, O'ahu
- May 31, 5:30-8 p.m., Keaukaha Elementary Cafeteria, Hilo, Hawai'i Island
- June 6, 5:30-8 p.m., Kulana 'Ōiwi Halau, Kalama'ula, Moloka'i
- June 10, 5:30-8 p.m., University of Hawai'i at Maui College, Kahului
- Friday, June 14, 6-8 p.m., Virtual Meeting for Hāna Community, Maui
- June 18, 5:30-8 p.m., Lili'uokalani Trust, Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i Island
- June 25, 5:30-8 p.m., War Memorial Convention Hall, Līhu'e, Kaua'i
- June 27, 6-8 p.m., Virtual Meeting for Lāna'i Community, Lāna'i
- June 28, 5:30-8 p.m., Blanche Pope Elementary School, Waimānalo, O'ahu
- July 1, 5:30-8 p.m., Wahiwā Elementary, O'ahu
- July 2, 6-8 p.m., Statewide Virtual Meeting



### "We have a bill!" Senate Bill 3279 passes its final committee.

*From left to right: Naomi Leipold, project manager and policy lead for OWR; Rep. Lisa Marten; Tia Hartsock, OWR director; Sen. Joy San Buenaventura; Sen. Sharon Moriwaki; Rep. Jenna Takenouchi*

## 2024 Legislative Session Highlights

OWR testified on 16 total measures that included bills and resolutions that addressed mental health, state workforce well-being and economic supports for families. Five of those bills, below, passed conference and are waiting Governor Green's signature to become law.

- SB3094 re: Peer Support Specialists Working Group
- SB3279 re: State of Well-Being Project
- SB2305 re: Silver Alert Program
- HB1830 re: Provisional/Associate Licensure
- HB2042 re: Youth Mental Health Fund

Mahalo to everyone who testified in support of these important measures! We are particularly excited about two bills that have a more direct impact on our work, as outlined below.

### Senate Bill 3094: Peer Support Specialists Working Group

S.B. 3094 establishes a Peer Support Specialist Working Group within OWR. The Working Group will develop and make recommendations for a framework for peer support specialists in the State. Working Group members consist of several state departments, community partners, and peers support specialists. In addition to looking at best practices to certifying and credentialing peers, the framework will look at trauma-informed supervision and sustainable funding to support the work of peer support specialists.

### Senate Bill 3279: State of Well-Being Project

S.B. 3279 expands our Office of Wellness and Resilience with additional staff to assess and enhance existing well-being supports in our communities statewide. The State of Well-Being Project aims to strengthen mental health and well-being supports by building upon existing programs and establishing services when they are non-existent and/or there are significant gaps. The Project is built upon the approach that well-being services are healing when they are culturally grounded and community-informed.

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# More Photos from the Last Few Months!



Aimee Chung, Tia Hartsock and Sharon Simms at the Mental Health America Awards Luncheon on May 21



The State Capitol lit up green for mental health awareness



The bell stone and lele at Pu'u 'O Moa'ula Iki on Kaho'olawe



Above from left: OWR interns Mia Ogata, Sara Thorn, Leah Delos Santos with project manager Naomi Leipold, her daughter Gigi and superheroes at HCAN Speaks! Keiki Strong Rally on March 22



Above, preparing to chant E Ala E, the sunrise chant for Kaho'olawe. Right, Roman Corpuz, Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana kua, carrying the Hawaiian flag to the summit of Kaho'olawe



OWR staff and mental health community members at the Mental Health Day resource fair at the Capitol on May 1



Mental Health America of Hawaii executive director Bryan Talisayan with OWR staff at the Mental Health Awards Luncheon on May 21





From left to right: Naomi Leipold, project manager; Erica Yamauchi, director of communications and engagement; Rachel Nunies; graduate research assistant; Jodie Burgess, executive administrative assistant; Shugufa Basij-Rasikh, graduate research assistant; Sara Thorn, Leah Delos Santos and Mia Ogata, interns; Kev Thompson, project manager; Tia Hartsock, director; Keala Kaopuiki-Santos, project manager

## Kūpa'a Maui Ola

We hosted 275+ state agency leaders on May 31, 2024, at the Ko'olau Ballrooms in Kāne'ohe. We appreciate the continued partnership in making Hawai'i a trauma-informed state! We had several discussions and presentations in the morning related to resilience and trauma-informed care. Later, attendees participated in wellness activities (below), from ukulele and hula to meditation and frond-weaving, as well as an activity to better understand the lasting effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).



## Mahalo to Our Speakers

Thank you to Governor Josh Green, M.D., and First Lady Jaime Kanani Green (above) for welcoming everyone to the Summit, and Dr. Val Kalei Kanuha for our keynote address related to her story of resilience. A big mahalo also to our local cultural practitioners for providing cultural protocol, wellness activities, and insight into both historical trauma and intergenerational resilience.



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## Maui Updates

As the month of August draws near, we are taking more intentional time this month to remember the lives of those we lost in the Maui wildfires in the last year, as well as their families and loved ones.

We all handle loss in different ways. Some of us may want to honor them in our own individual ways, like through community service and/or prayer, while others may want to do this as a family or collective community.

For a listing of remembrance gatherings throughout the beginning of August on Maui, visit [kuhiniamau.org](http://kuhiniamau.org).





# Director's Message



Tia L. R. Hartsock,  
Director

I am so grateful to everyone who was able to attend our inaugural Kūpa'a Maui Ola, Hawai'i's Wellness and Resilience Summit! We are very appreciative to our Summit sponsors for their generous support in making the gathering a success – the Hawai'i Community Foundation, Consuelo Zobel Alger Foundation and Hawai'i Children's Action Network.

Mahalo again to all of you who have taken the workplace wellness and quality of life survey at [health-study.com](http://health-study.com). More than 10,000+ residents responded, officially making it the largest statewide survey on well-being – ever. We'll be sharing out the results soon, and are excited for this data to start making a difference in future state policy and community programming.

One last thing – we are hiring! In accordance with the signing of Act 106 (see right), our Office is growing. We will be adding several wellness and resilience coordinators to our statewide team, both on O'ahu and on our neighbor islands, to engage with local communities in resilience-building, healing-centered work. One of these positions on O'ahu is also reserved for a professional with lived experience in our systems.

Help us spread the word! To apply, visit [owr.hawaii.gov/careers](http://owr.hawaii.gov/careers).

Mālama pono,

Tia

## Signed Bills to Acts

- Senate Bill 3094, now Act 88, was our 2024 legislative session priority bill and establishes a Peer Support Specialist Working Group within OWR. The working group will develop recommendations for a framework for peer support specialists in the state. We plan to convene the first group's meeting in September.
- Senate Bill 3279, now Act 106, expands OWR with additional staff to assess and enhance existing well-being supports in our communities statewide. The State of Well-Being Project aims to strengthen supports by building upon existing programs and establishing services when they are non-existent and/or there are significant gaps with the approach that all well-being services must be culturally grounded and community informed.



## Summit Take-Aways and Next Steps

The Kūpa'a Maui Ola Summit validated for us that our state and our leaders are committed to workforce wellness – and creating healing-centered spaces and services for all. In the next few months and throughout the fall, we will be sharing the Hawai'i Well-Being and Quality of Life Survey results with departments and the larger community, as well as creating public data dashboards. We are also meeting with departments to discuss their trauma-informed care goals and how to implement them. Below, graphic notes from the morning session of the Summit. To view them all, visit [owr.hawaii.gov](http://owr.hawaii.gov).



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# Kūpa'a Maui Ola

Hawai'i Wellness & Resilience Summit

May 31, 2024 | Ko'olau Ballrooms, Kāne'ohe

Mahalo for attending our Inaugural Summit for state agency leadership, supervisors and partners!



From left: Danny Goya, Sharon Simms, Tia Hartsock and Patrick Uchigakiuchi speak on the Lessons from the Evolution of Trauma-Informed Care in Hawai'i panel



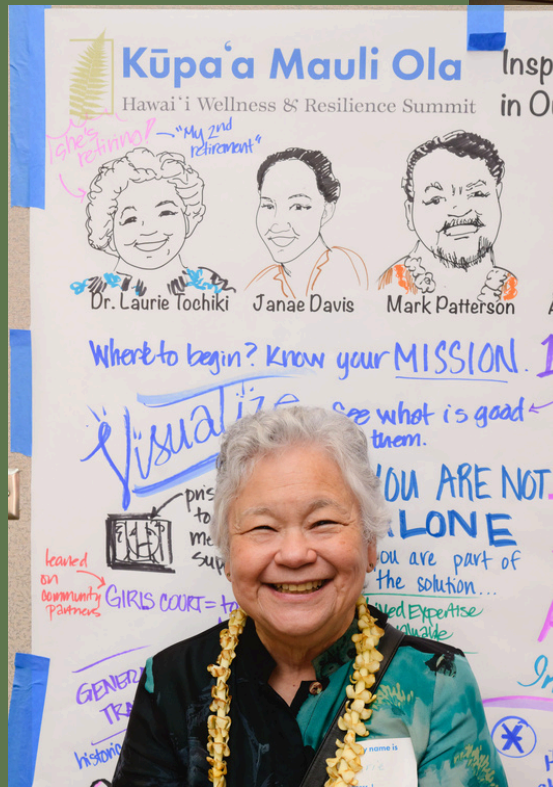
Attendees take a moment of calm and mindful breathing to reset before the next set of activities



From left: Mark Kawika Patterson, Adriane Abe, Janae Davis and Laurie Tochiki discuss peer support and other topics on the Inspiring Implementation of Trauma-Informed Care in Our Systems panel



Keynote speaker Dr. Val Kalei Kanuha addresses attendees



### Happy Retirement, Laurie!

The Summit coincided with Laurie Tochiki's last day as executive director of EPIC 'Ohana. Mahalo for your many contributions to Hawai'i's families! Laurie poses here with her own caricature by The Good Juju Co., our visual notetakers.

To see all the illustrated notes from the event, visit our website at: [owr.hawaii.gov](http://owr.hawaii.gov).



From right: Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Dr. Trina Orimoto and summit attendees build a brain of pipe cleaners and straws during the Brain Architecture Game, simulating the long-term effects of toxic stress and trauma on a developing brain.





### Welcoming our new deputy director, Dr. Trina Orimoto, on her first day at the Capitol!

From left to right: Erica Yamauchi, director of communications and engagement; Jodie Burgess, fiscal and procurement manager; Dr. Trina Orimoto, deputy director; Dr. Puanani Hee, psychologist, Child & Adolescent Mental Health Division, Dept. of Health; Tia L.R. Hartsock, director

## Health Workforce

Tia participated in a panel (below) on vicarious trauma and workplace wellness at the Hawai'i Health Workforce Summit, a conference hosted by the Hawai'i/Pacific Basin AHEC (Area Health Education Center) for about 600 practicing healthcare professionals in the state, including physicians, nurses, community health workers and administrators. It covers diverse topics including telehealth, COVID, geriatrics, opioids, and healthcare provider well-being.



## Staff Celebrations

Our very own Jodie Burgess (above) has been chosen to be part of the inaugural 'Ōiwi Leadership Accelerator. Jodie has also moved into a new OWR role as our fiscal and procurement manager. In addition, Erica Yamauchi was awarded the President's Leadership Award by the Public Relations Society of America's Hawai'i Chapter.



## Maui Updates

The one-year memorial of the Maui wildfires was remembered in early August, and we are committed to the long-term mental health response as we know its effects will be felt on Maui and beyond for many years.

Please email us at [gov.owr@hawaii.gov](mailto:gov.owr@hawaii.gov) if you are interested in collaboration and attending our weekly coordinated mental health response call.

Below, from left to right: Keala Kaopuiki-Santos, project manager; Michele Navarro-Ishiki, LCSW; Amy Petersen, assistant project director with Dept. of Health's Maui Behavioral Health Wildfire Response, Tia L.R. Hartsock, director



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# Director's Message



Tia L. R. Hartsock,  
Director

We hope you've had a wonder-full summer season, as it winds down into fall.

Mahalo nui loa (thank you very much) to everyone who applied to our open positions and sent the announcement along. In accordance with the signing of Act 106 (see right), our Office is growing and we'll be adding several wellness and resilience coordinators to our statewide team, both on O'ahu and on our neighbor islands, to engage with local communities in resilience-building, healing-centered work.

We're so excited to get this work up and running under the leadership of Dr. Trina Orimoto., our new deputy director Trina has a been a longtime friend of OWR, having helped lead efforts at the University of Hawai'i Social Science Research Institute with our state quality of life and workplace wellness survey.

Speaking of the survey, we have begun sharing the preliminary statewide results, and are meeting with state departmental leaders in October about more detailed data. We are excited to share more of the data publicly in November, and hope to launch our public dashboards by year's end as well.

Mālama pono,

*Tia*

## Policy Updates

- The State of Well-Being Project ([Act 106](#)), expands OWR with additional staff to assess and enhance existing well-being supports in our communities statewide. We are almost finished with the hiring process and will begin work in accordance with the act in October.
- The Peer Support Specialist Working Group ([Act 88](#)), convened by OWR, had its first meeting in mid-September. The working group will develop recommendations for a framework for peer support specialists in the state. For more information, visit [owr.hawaii.gov/peersupport](http://owr.hawaii.gov/peersupport) or email [gov.peers@hawaii.gov](mailto:gov.peers@hawaii.gov). Below, Naomi Leipold, project manager, facilitates a panel with peer support specialists from EPIC 'Ohana and Pū'a Foundation.



## Mālama 'Ohana Working Group Recommendations

The Mālama 'Ohana Working Group hosted 12 meetings across the state, both in local communities from Kaua'i to Hilo, and online. From the meetings, the working group worked to analyze and code the community's feedback into more than 100 recommendations. They were then organized by theme, including prevention, creating trauma-informed and family-serving systems, cultural and Indigenous practices, and accountability and transparency. To view all of the Mālama 'Ohana Working Group's recommendations, visit [the Mālama 'Ohana Working Group website at malamaohana.net](http://theMālama'OhanaWorkingGroupwebsiteatmalamaohana.net).



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**Welcoming Telesia, our new executive administrative assistant, and our wellness and resilience coordinators (WRCs): Tikki (on Maui), Nannie (on Kaua'i), Ana and Leilani (on O'ahu)!**

*Left to right, top row: Keala Kaopuiki-Santos, project manager; Ana Kia, wellness and resilience coordinator (WRC); Jodie L.H. Burgess, procurement and contracts specialist; Tikki Bisbee, WRC; Kev Thompson, project manager; Aunty Kū Kahakalau, cultural advisor and executive director of Kū-A-Kānāka; Telesia Pasese, executive administrative assistant; Leilani Willing, WRC. Front row: Nannie Apalla, WRC; Rachel Aquino-Nunies, graduate research assistant; Naomi Leipold, project manager; Trina Orimoto, deputy director; Erica Yamauchi, director of communications and engagement; Tia L.R. Hartssock, director*

## Mahalo, Aunty Kū!

Our team had the incredible opportunity to work with Aunty Kū Kahakalau of Hilo several times these last few months for cultural education and training, as well as consultation regarding cultural grounding for our Office. This effort is part of our pursuit of modeling trauma-informed care that accounts for cultural and historical traumas. Below, Nannie, our wellness and resilience coordinator on Kaua'i, offers a special makana (Ōlelo Hawai'i: gift) of local pa'akai (sea salt) from Kaua'i to Aunty Kū in gratitude for her teachings.



## Arbor Day Planting

As part of our efforts to support the Wai'anae Coast community in mitigating violence, Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) staff volunteered time planting trees and beautifying the campus of Nānākuli High School alongside Department of Education and community members on Sat., Nov. 2 during their Arbor Day celebration.



## Maui Updates

Several members of our team presented at a special symposium, in partnership with the University of Hawai'i's Wildfire Exposure Study (MauiWES) team in a session titled *Trauma-Informed Approaches to Understanding Wellness and Resilience in Hawai'i Following the Maui Wildfires* at the American Public Health Association conference in October. Our collaborative work with the Maui mental health community, as well as our statewide survey partnership with UH re: well-being (including disaster preparedness), was highlighted. Below, OWR's Keala Kaopuiki-Santos, Trina Orimoto and Tia Hartssock.



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# Director's Message



Tia L. R. Hartsock,  
Director

As we enter the holiday season and reflect on this past year, I am reminded of the resilience of our collective community. I have so much gratitude for those who have come before us to pave the pathway for us to continue their work. This is the best kind of passion work—to work towards equity, healthier workplaces and well-being in communities filled with hope.

There were several local living treasures we lost this year who now live in our hearts. One whom impacted me immensely, and worked tirelessly to create beloved communities in Hawai'i for decades, often spoke of hope. Auntie Puanani Burgess shared her vision of how each and every one of us has a gift. And when we recognize each person's unique gift, it allows what might be difficult conversations to flow from the right place, from the na'au (gut; core). As we enter this new year, which will inevitably bring new challenges both locally and on a greater scale, how can we continue to come from a place of hope?

Ua Mau ke Ea o ka 'Āina i ka Pono: The life of this land is perpetuated in righteousness. This is Hawai'i's state motto and Auntie Pua would often remind me how important these words are for this work. My hope for this coming year is to continue to embrace our gifts, recognize others' gifts, and be curious about how all of us can deeply live its meaning—to perpetuate what is righteous for this place.

Mālama pono,

## Policy Updates

- The State of Well-Being Project ([Act 106](#)) expanded OWR with staff to assess and enhance existing well-being supports in key stakeholder communities statewide. We are now finished with the hiring and onboarding process, and have begun work on strategic planning and the landscape analysis.
- The Peer Support Specialist Working Group ([Act 88](#)), convened by OWR, is meeting monthly. The working group is developing policy recommendations for a framework for state peer support specialists. For more information, visit [owr.hawaii.gov/peersupport](http://owr.hawaii.gov/peersupport) or email [gov.peers@hawaii.gov](mailto:gov.peers@hawaii.gov).
- The Mālama 'Ohana Working Group's final report is out. To review the report and the working group's recommendations for the child welfare system, visit the group's website at [malamaohana.net](http://malamaohana.net).



## NGA Center Youth Mental Health Policy Academy

Hawai'i is one of six states to participate in the [National Governors Association Center for Best Practices](#) (NGA Center) Policy Academy to Drive Thriving Youth Mental Health and Well-Being. Our Office convened 50+ child and youth mental health leaders in November (below) as part of a collaborative, year-long commitment to build on and advance holistic efforts supporting youth mental health and emotional well-being across state agencies, including strategies encompassing prevention, awareness, treatment, and community and youth engagement—with youth peer support advisors guiding the work.



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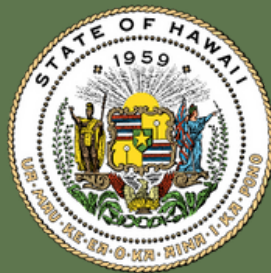
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Ke Ke'ena Kūpa'a Maui Ola  
Office of Wellness and Resilience  
Office of the Governor

*Our resilience is rooted in our wellness.*



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