



Above photo, from left to right, top row: Jodie Burgess, executive administrative assistant; Kevin Thompson, project manager; Tia L. R. Hartsock, director; Naomi Leipold, project manager; Erica Yamauchi, director of communications and engagement; Keala Kaopuiki-Santos, project manager. Front row: Shugufa Basij-Rasikh, graduate research assistant; Keona Loftis, intern; Rachel Aquino, graduate research assistant

## Wellness Weekends

In October, we started a new collaboration with Kamehameha Schools and Hui Ho'omalua to offer free lomilomi (massage) and bodywork, as well as kūkākūkā (talk story) on the weekends in hotel shelters. The Hui consists of diverse cultural practitioners with a collective commitment to uplift the Maui community through traditional Hawaiian healing practices.



## Survivor Services

Volunteers have also offered ukulele lessons, as well as arts and crafts classes. Trained mental health professionals continue working with survivors during the "re-entry" process (right) and going door to door in the hotel shelters (left) using donated Hawaiian Airlines carts to talk story and provide support.

## Maui Updates

Our Office worked directly with the Hawai'i Tourism Authority on healing-centered visitor messaging as West Maui "re-opened" to tourism. For more information on this effort, visit: <https://www.hawaiiourismauthority.org/maui-recovery/for-businesses/>.

We are also thankful for our inclusion on a team of agencies working with the American Red Cross on their communications with survivors.

For more information about our now weekly Maui coordinated mental health response meetings and/or to be added to the meeting invitation, 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

We're winding down what has been both a momentous and tumultuous year for our Office, our islands, our world. It's hard to believe that when the year began, our Office didn't even exist yet.

And at the beginning of August, none of us knew what would transpire on Maui and that we would have our resilience as a state put to the test in such a devastating way.

As we prepare for the long-term recovery effort on Maui, including increased behavioral and mental health services, I am again reminded of how much our lives can change in an instant and how our plans for the future can be thwarted by one day's events. This is the long-lasting effect trauma has on our lives and in our communities.

While we had different plans for the Office this latter half of the year, our team agrees that our most impactful work has been working with survivors on Maui, and helping to stand up the coordinated mental health response with our government, healthcare and community partners. We look forward to continuing this work in 2024 alongside the people of Maui.

Wishing you and your families a happy and healthy holiday season.

Mālama pono,

## Policy Updates

Our Office is planning for a bill proposing a working group to expand peer support in our state systems, which is a key principle of trauma-informed care. A peer support worker is someone with the lived experience of recovery from a mental health or substance use challenge, or other life difficulty. They provide non-clinical, strengths-based support to others experiencing similar challenges, and provide a critical source of hope for trauma survivors.

The Mālama 'Ohana Working Group (Act 86), which is tasked with making needed reforms to our child welfare system alongside families with lived experience, recently had their third meeting. The group will meet monthly through July 2024, and will also host community listening sessions. Their recommendations are due prior to the 2025 session.

The Breakthrough Therapies Task Force, which has jump-started the state conversation around innovative trauma treatments (namely psilocybin), has continued to meet to prepare for legislative session. It will hold a public webinar in late November to share their progress and discuss next steps.

## Interim Lunch & Learn Series

Mahalo to everyone who attended any or all of our three Lunch & Learn series events! The first was held in August to provide an introduction to our Office and team, while our September event was about policy, including a primer on trauma-informed care. Our last event (below), held in November, was a joint presentation with our partners at the University of Hawai'i Social Science Research Institute about our upcoming statewide survey on wellness and resilience, which will inform future state policy and community initiatives.



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) 586-0034

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

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