

Proclamation

No community is immune from the problems of alcoholism and abusive drinking patterns. The problem is not merely limited to underage drinkers, but affects anyone with binge drinking habits or who becomes alcohol dependent. In addition, non-drinkers and drinkers who are not dependent are also affected.

Nearly 14 million Americans abuse alcohol or are alcoholic, but less than one quarter of those people receive treatment annually. Hawai'i leads the country in the percentage of traffic deaths involving at least one vehicle operator with a blood alcohol content that is above the legal limit. In addition, while contributing to the deaths of almost 85,000 people every year in the United States, long-term health risks from abusive alcohol consumption include a variety of cancers, cirrhosis of the liver, immune system problems, brain damage and heart problems.

Alcohol has a profound impact on families, as well. Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders remain the leading preventable cause of birth defects in the United States, affecting as many as 40,000 babies and costing more than \$5.4 billion every year. In addition, alcohol consumption is a factor in more than 75 percent of all domestic abuse cases.

Underage drinking poses a number of immediate and long-term threats to young Hawai'i residents and visitors. Often, before an adolescent reaches adulthood, they are exposed to the negative influences of alcohol and drug abuse. According to the state Health Department's Alcohol and Drug Division, alcohol use runs second only to marijuana as the preferred illicit drug in Hawai'i for youth. Mothers Against Drunk Driving (M.A.D.D.) notes that alcohol is the most significant contributor in automobile crashes, homicides and suicides – the three leading causes of death among adolescents. More than 16,000 people in the United States die annually as a result of drunk drivers. Early exposure to alcohol can also affect individuals once they become adults by increasing their chances of habitual binge drinking or becoming addicted to alcohol or illegal drugs.

For the past 21 years, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has designated April as *Alcohol Awareness Month* as part of a national effort to educate the public about the long-term effects of alcohol abuse and alcoholism. The Hawai'i Department of Health works continually with members of law enforcement, organizations, families, schools and concerned individuals throughout Hawai'i to reinforce the importance of drinking responsibly and emphasizing education, physical fitness and community involvement as key to ensuring that residents realize their full potential without the excessive use of alcohol.

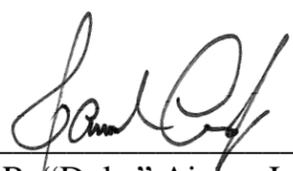
THEREFORE, I, LINDA LINGLE, Governor, and **I, JAMES R. "DUKE" AIONA, JR.**, Lieutenant Governor of the State of Hawai'i, do hereby proclaim **April 2008**, as

ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH

in Hawai'i, and encourage our residents to be aware of the dangers of abusive drinking patterns and alcoholism.

DONE at the State Capitol, in the Executive Chambers, Honolulu, State of Hawai'i, this first day of April 2008.


Linda Lingle
Governor, State of Hawai'i


James R. "Duke" Aiona, Jr.
Lieutenant Governor, State of Hawai'i