



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

**News Release**

**LINDA LINGLE**  
GOVERNOR

---

CHIYOME LEINAALA FUKINO M.D.  
DIRECTOR  
Phone: (808) 586-4410  
Fax: (808) 586-4444

---

For Immediate Release: December 9, 2008

08-108

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH MEETS WITH HAWAII'S POLICY MAKERS  
ON HOW COMMUNITY DESIGN CONTRIBUTES TO INACTIVITY AND  
OBESITY**

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i State Department of Health Healthy Hawai'i Initiative (HHI) hosted a workshop this week for Hawai'i's elected officials to brief them on HHI's Active Living Community Training Program. The presentation highlighted State and County level policies that could impact the design of our communities and provided specific policy examples that could be implemented in our State. Participants included state legislators and county council members.

The presentation by Mark Fenton focused on describing the role of public health in community design and provided specific examples of policies that promote active living. The policy initiatives include concepts such as complete streets and mixed use zoning.

The Policy Makers Workshop is a component of a larger Statewide Active Living Community Training Program. This capacity-building program addresses the needs of community members, local leaders and advocates interested in designing healthier communities. Over the course of the last year workshops have been conducted on Hawai'i Island, O'ahu, Maui, Moloka'i and Lana'i.

Fenton, who facilitated the workshop series, is a nationally recognized expert in walkable, bicycle-friendly community policies and designs and the public health impacts. At this workshop, he summarized his experiences across the islands, provided an assessment of Hawai'i communities and made recommendations on potential policies for the state and counties.

One recommendation is to implement a “Complete Streets” policy requiring all roadways be designed to safely accommodate all users, including bicyclists, pedestrians, transit riders, children, seniors, people with disabilities, and motorists. Across the United States, more than 70 jurisdictions have adopted complete streets measures and five states, including California, have complete streets legislation. Similar language to California’s newly enacted complete streets policy could be used in developing complete streets legislation in Hawai‘i.

Healthy Hawaii Initiative Manager, Lola Irvin welcomed workshop participants and gave an update on the role of the Department of Health in regards to the built environment.

“Across the nation, states are considering how community design has negatively influenced the ability to walk and bike to places and curtailed easy access to healthy food options,” Irvin stated. “Inactivity and poor nutrition contribute to obesity, diabetes and heart disease. We know that creating change at the policy level will have broad public health impact,” Irvin explained.

Approaches such as complete streets, smart growth and new urbanism are being explored by states across the nation and Hawai‘i has an opportunity to be at the forefront of this movement.

The Policy Makers Workshop is a part of the HHI’s social-ecological approach that reduces the burden of chronic disease in Hawai‘i by encouraging physical activity, healthy eating and living tobacco free on multiple levels; individual, interpersonal, organizational, community and public policy. For more information on HHI visit [www.healthyhawaii.com](http://www.healthyhawaii.com).

###

For more information contact:

Nalani Aki, MPA, Community Program Coordinator  
Department of Health, Healthy Hawai‘i Initiative  
Phone: (808) 586-4526  
E-mail: [nalani.aki@doh.hawaii.gov](mailto:nalani.aki@doh.hawaii.gov)

Alice Silbanuz, Public Education Coordinator  
Department of Health, Healthy Hawai‘i Initiative / Communications  
Phone: (808) 586-4434 or 722-5381  
E-mail: [alice.silbanuz@doh.hawaii.gov](mailto:alice.silbanuz@doh.hawaii.gov)