

**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF HAWAI'I**

**EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 24-01
Making Hawai'i a Trauma-Informed State**

By the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the State of Hawai'i, in order to elevate the wellness and resilience of our people, I, JOSH GREEN, M.D., Governor of the State of Hawai'i, hereby declare and order as follows:

WHEREAS, *trauma* is described by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration as the result of “an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life-threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being;” and

WHEREAS, the Trauma-Informed Care Task Force was established by Act 209, Session Laws 2021, to develop and make recommendations for trauma-informed care in the State of Hawai'i. The Trauma-Informed Care Task Force defines *trauma-informed care* is “an approach to understanding, recognizing, respecting, and responding to the pervasive and widespread impacts of trauma on our ability to connect with ourselves and others, our place and the elements around us, and our ways of being;” and

WHEREAS, the Office of Wellness and Resilience was established by Act 291, Session Laws 2022, as a semi-autonomous authority to adopt and implement the framework for trauma-informed care and trauma-responsive practices put forward by the Trauma-Informed Care Task Force; and

WHEREAS, the concept of Aloha is to have compassion and empathy. The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Study and subsequent studies have shown ACEs are potentially traumatic events that can interfere with a person’s health, opportunities, and stability throughout their lifetime. Current research indicates adults in Hawai'i have higher than average ACEs scores as compared to other states. Understanding the impact of ACEs on an individual’s health, opportunities, and stability embodies the concept of Aloha; and

WHEREAS, Kūola means to be alive and safe. Trauma has many contributing factors such as historical, intergenerational, and community traumas, which the people of Hawai'i have endured. Historical trauma is linked to high rates of substance use, depression, suicidality, and other health disparities within marginalized populations, specifically the Native Hawaiian community; and

WHEREAS, Lōkahi means harmony and balance. The trauma resulting from exposure to natural disasters may disrupt harmony and balance as trauma can manifest as mental and behavioral health issues. With children, trauma may manifest through decreased emotional regulation, increased anxiety and depression, and decreased academic performance. With adults, trauma may manifest as sleep disturbances, maladaptive reactions and behaviors, and increased reporting of health issues; and

WHEREAS, Kāko'o means to support and assist. It is important to support and assist the State's workforce by valuing and supporting the mental health and well-being of its employees. When people are anxious or depressed, productivity tends to decline, and retention goals may be harmed. When state employees are well, we can better serve our people and our state; and

WHEREAS, Mālama means to care for and protect. It is important to take a trauma-informed care approach to address all forms of trauma; and

WHEREAS, implementing the Trauma-Informed Care Task Force framework throughout the state departments is necessary in minimizing the harm and risk factors associated with trauma.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOSH GREEN, M.D., Governor of the State of Hawai'i, pursuant to my authority under the Constitution and laws of the State of Hawai'i – including, but not limited to, article V, section 1 of the Hawaii Constitution, and sections 27-62, and 27-63, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS)—do hereby **DECLARE** that all executive state departments collectively move towards becoming a trauma-informed state and do hereby **ORDER** the following:

1. While operating within the trauma-informed framework created by the Trauma-Informed Care Task Force, the Office of Wellness and Resilience is to support each state department with the identification of its existing strengths, resources, and

barriers to change. The Office of Wellness and Resilience will work collaboratively with each state department to achieve their trauma-informed care goals.

2. Executive state departments and agencies are directed to collaborate with the Office of Wellness and Resilience's assessment efforts. This may include, but is not limited to:
 - a. Participating in trauma-informed care assessments led by the Office of Wellness and Resilience.
 - b. Identifying a deputy director, or their designee, to serve as the department's Trauma-Informed Care Liaison as designated by the director of each department. The Trauma-Informed Care Liaison, with support from the Office of Wellness and Resilience, will lead efforts to implement the trauma-informed care framework within their respective department.
3. The Office of Wellness and Resilience shall provide training and technical assistance to support trauma-informed policies, practices, programs, and processes. This may include, but is not limited to:
 - a. Offering training to staff to increase their knowledge about the impact of ACEs and secondary traumatic stress on short-term and long-term health outcomes.
 - b. Providing strategies to promote workforce wellness, enhance staff self-care and resilience, and mitigate secondary traumatic stress.
 - c. Assessing and making recommendations regarding existing policies, practices, programs, and processes to align with trauma-informed care principles based on the operations and needs of the respective executive state departments.
4. Executive state departments will integrate trauma-informed care principles, when appropriate, to help mitigate the impact of ACEs and build resilience in children, adults, families, and communities, as well as our state workforce after consultation and collaboration with the Office of Wellness and Resilience. This may include, but is not limited to:
 - a. Using trauma-responsive language that supports reducing the impacts of adverse events without re-traumatization in requests for proposals and in-

service contracts with providers, notwithstanding any other laws to the contrary, and when appropriate or as applicable.

- b. Implementing evidence-informed services based on the Trauma-Informed Task Force's framework to mitigate and respond to secondary traumatic stress and build resilience in children, adults, and communities, as appropriate.

Done at the State Capitol, Honolulu,
State of Hawai'i, this 20th day of
February, 2024.



JOSH GREEN, M.D.,
Governor of Hawai'i

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Anne E. Lopez

Anne E. Lopez
Attorney General
State of Hawai'i