

## ISSUE BRIEF: COVID-19 AND NATIVE HAWAIIAN COMMUNITIES

# Native Hawaiians Over-Represented in COVID-19 At-Risk Populations

## Purpose:

To demonstrate the needs, impacts, and vulnerabilities of the Native Hawaiian community amid the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) public health crisis.

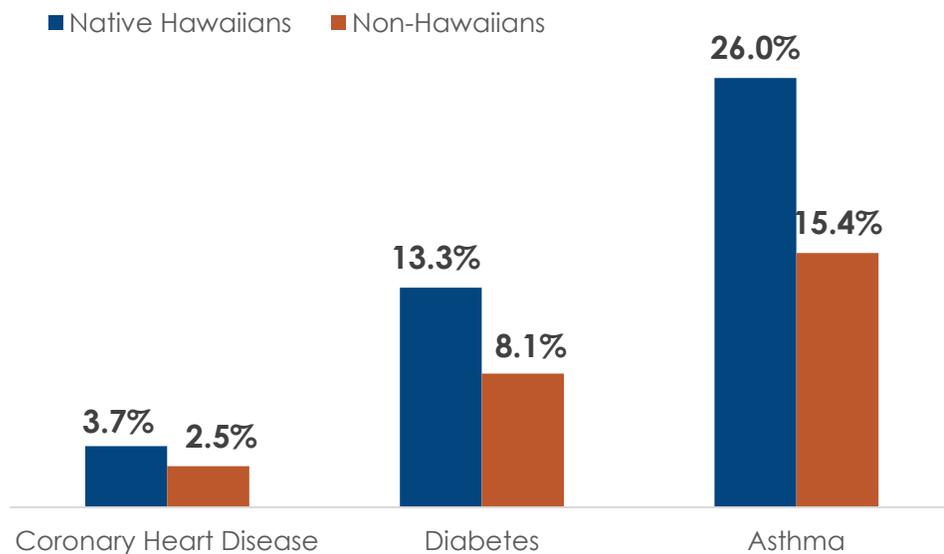
## Findings:

### Health Risk:

Native Hawaiians are at greater risk due to existing Medical Conditions

- Native Hawaiians have a greater prevalence of all known medical conditions that put individuals at greater risk of serious illness resulting from COVID-19, including coronary heart disease, diabetes and lung disease.

### Prevalence Rates of Medical Conditions, At-Risk Populations



- Throughout the State of Hawai'i, 4,300 Native Hawaiians suffer from Coronary Heart Disease, or 3.7% of the Native Hawaiian population, in comparison to 2.5% of the Non-Hawaiian population.
- Throughout the State of Hawai'i, 15,700 Native Hawaiians suffer from Diabetes, or 13.3% of the Native Hawaiian population, in comparison to 8.1% of the Non-Hawaiian population.

- Throughout the State of Hawai'i, 36,100 Native Hawaiians suffer from Asthma, or 26.0% of the Native Hawaiian population, in comparison to 15.4% of the Non-Hawaiian population
- In addition to being at greater risk of serious illness resulting from COVID-19, some Native Hawaiians are also unable to quickly and appropriately address the illness as 7.8% of our population report having no health care coverage.

Source. Hawai'i Health Data Warehouse, Hawai'i State Department of Health, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, [5-year estimates, 2013-2017]. <http://ibis.hhdw.org/ibisph-view/>

#### Many Native Hawaiians are members of Vulnerable Populations

- Native Hawaiians are over-represented in populations that are at greater risk of contracting and spreading COVID-19 due to housing conditions.
- Native Hawaiians make-up 43% of the homeless population on O'ahu alone, and 39% of the prison population. These populations do not have access to proper hygiene resources and do not have the private space available to create social distance, which are the recommended methods of preventing spread.  
Source. Partners in Care: O'ahu Continuum of Care. (2019). O'ahu 2019 Point in Time Count: Unsheltered [Data file]. Unpublished raw data; Creating Better Outcomes, Safer Communities Final Report of the House Concurrent Resolution 85 Task Force on Prison Reform to the Hawai'i Legislature 2019 Regular Session. (2018) Creating Better Outcomes, Safer Communities Final Report of the House Concurrent Resolution 85 Task Force on Prison Reform to the Hawai'i Legislature 2019 Regular Session. Pg. 27. [https://19of32x2vl33s8o4xza0gf14-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/HCR-85-Task-Force-on-Prison-Reform\\_Final-Report\\_12.28.18.pdf](https://19of32x2vl33s8o4xza0gf14-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/HCR-85-Task-Force-on-Prison-Reform_Final-Report_12.28.18.pdf)
- Native Hawaiians may also be at greater risk of higher death rates resulting from COVID-19, as some sources suggest that due to increased barriers to health care, rural communities are experiencing more related deaths. In Hawai'i, approximately 12% of Native Hawaiians live in rural areas in comparison to 8.5% of the total state population.  
Source. U.S. Census Bureau. (2000). Census 2000 Summary File 2 100-Percent Data. Table PCT002 -Urban and Rural [6]. Decennial Census. Retrieved 3.20.2020.
- Hawaiian kūpuna (elderly) constitute only 10.5% of the Native Hawaiian population in the State due to the shorter life-expectancy of Native Hawaiians. In comparison, the elderly in Hawai'i comprise 18.4% of the total population. In fact, Native Hawaiians have the shortest life-expectancy of the six major ethnic groups in the state.  
Source. U.S. Census Bureau. (2018). Selected Population Profile in the United States, 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Retrieved 3.19.2020.  
[https://data.census.gov/cedsci/all?q=s0201%202018%20hawaii&hidePreview=false&tid=ACSSPP1Y2018.S0201&y=2018&cid=S0201\\_001E&vintage=2018&q=0400000US15](https://data.census.gov/cedsci/all?q=s0201%202018%20hawaii&hidePreview=false&tid=ACSSPP1Y2018.S0201&y=2018&cid=S0201_001E&vintage=2018&q=0400000US15); Office of Hawaiian Affairs. (2017). Kānehō'ālanī – Transforming the Health of Native Hawaiian Men. Honolulu, HI: Office of Hawaiian Affairs. Pg. 32.  
[https://19of32x2vl33s8o4xza0gf14-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/Kane\\_Health\\_Report\\_Final\\_web-REV.pdf](https://19of32x2vl33s8o4xza0gf14-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/Kane_Health_Report_Final_web-REV.pdf)

### **Economic Impact:**

#### Native Hawaiian Communities are poised to suffer disproportionate finance hardship

- Native Hawaiians are at greater risk of suffering financial hardship from the negative economic conditions that are likely to result from the spread of COVID-19.

- Native Hawaiians have fewer financial resources to weather financial emergencies due to their already lower per capita income (\$25,590) in comparison to the total state population (\$35,255); and their lower median household income (\$75,708) compared to the total state population (\$80,212). In fact, 12.3% of all Native Hawaiians live in poverty, compared to 8.8% of the total state population.  
Source. U.S. Census Bureau. (2018). Selected Population Profile in the United States, 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Retrieved 3.19.2020.  
[https://data.census.gov/cedsci/all?q=s0201%202018%20hawaii&hidePreview=false&tid=ACSSP1Y2018.S0201&y=2018&cid=S0201\\_001E&vintage=2018&q=0400000US15;](https://data.census.gov/cedsci/all?q=s0201%202018%20hawaii&hidePreview=false&tid=ACSSP1Y2018.S0201&y=2018&cid=S0201_001E&vintage=2018&q=0400000US15;)
- Native Hawaiians also have less access to financial services which provide credit and capital in times of economic crisis. Although no state level statistics are available, nationally, 6.1% of Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander households were unbanked and 25.1% were underbanked, indicating that although Native Hawaiians have access to checking or savings accounts, many utilize alternative financial services, such as non-bank check cashing services, payday loans, pawn shops, etc., to meet their financial needs. In times of decreased hours, or temporary and permanent lay-offs, reliance on these high-interest, high-fee financial services will increase Native Hawaiian debt and create long-term barriers to financial recovery.  
Source. Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. (2014) National Survey of Unbanked and Underbanked Households. <https://www.fdic.gov/householdsurvey/2013/2013report.pdf>
- Like other Hawai'i residents, many Native Hawaiians rely on the service and tourist industries to financially support their families. 33,279, or 23.6%, of working Native Hawaiians are employed in service occupations, which are currently the occupations most impacted by the economic conditions resulting from the spread of COVID-19.  
Source. U.S. Census Bureau. (2018). Selected Population Profile in the United States, 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Retrieved 3.19.2020.  
[https://data.census.gov/cedsci/all?q=s0201%202018%20hawaii&hidePreview=false&tid=ACSSP1Y2018.S0201&y=2018&cid=S0201\\_001E&vintage=2018&q=0400000US15;](https://data.census.gov/cedsci/all?q=s0201%202018%20hawaii&hidePreview=false&tid=ACSSP1Y2018.S0201&y=2018&cid=S0201_001E&vintage=2018&q=0400000US15;)
- Additionally, 13,147 businesses in Hawai'i are owned by Native Hawaiians, representing 11.1% of all businesses statewide. Thirty-three percent of these businesses rely directly on the tourism sector.  
Source. U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 Survey of Business Owners, File SB1200CSA01, lines 14-3; Native Hawaiian-Owned Firms in Hawai'i's Tourism Sector, March 2017. Retrieved from [http://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/economic/reports/Native\\_Hawaiian\\_Owned\\_Business\\_in\\_Tourism.pdf](http://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/economic/reports/Native_Hawaiian_Owned_Business_in_Tourism.pdf)

## Education and Caregiving

### Native Hawaiians students and caregivers are losing substantial supports

- Native Hawaiian families are more dramatically impacted by the changes in caregiver supports resulting from the spread of COVID-19.
- A higher percentage of Native Hawaiian families include children (31.8%) in comparison to the total state population (25.7%) and therefore, are more directly and dramatically impacted by school closures. These closures not only impact the children's education, but also require parents to stay home presenting families with barriers to sustain their employment and income.  
Source. U.S. Census Bureau. (2018). Selected Population Profile in the United States, 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Retrieved 3.19.2020.  
[https://data.census.gov/cedsci/all?q=s0201%202018%20hawaii&hidePreview=false&tid=ACSSP1Y2018.S0201&y=2018&cid=S0201\\_001E&vintage=2018&q=0400000US15;](https://data.census.gov/cedsci/all?q=s0201%202018%20hawaii&hidePreview=false&tid=ACSSP1Y2018.S0201&y=2018&cid=S0201_001E&vintage=2018&q=0400000US15;)

- Approximately 46,800 Native Hawaiian students are impacted by the Hawai'i State Department of Education's (HIDOE) closure of all 289 public and charter schools in the State; set to extend from March 16<sup>th</sup> to April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Seventy percent of these Native Hawaiian students depend on the food provided through the schools' free or reduced-price meal program. At this time, the Department provides grab-and-go student meals only at select locations throughout the State.

Source. Hawai'i State Department of Education. HIDOE extends school closure, implements remote work to maintain essential functions. <http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/ConnectWithUs/MediaRoom/PressReleases/Pages/HIDOE-extends-school-closures-implements-remote-work-to-maintain-essential-functions.aspx>; Haliniak, C.L. (2017). A Native Hawaiian Focus on the Hawai'i Public School System, SY2015. (Ho'ona'auao (Education) Fact Sheet, Vol. 2017, No.1). Honolulu, HI: Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Research Division, Special Projects. <https://19of32x2yl33s8o4xza0qf14-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/A-Native-Hawaiian-Focus-on-the-Hawaii-Public-School-System.pdf>
- Although the HIDOE has not officially moved classes online, many parents attempt to continue student learning online. Native Hawaiian students may face additional barriers to this solution, as 9.5% of Native Hawaiian households do not have a computer in their homes and 18.4% do not have internet access, compared to 8.4% and 14.3% of the total State population, respectively.

Source. U.S. Census Bureau. (2018). Selected Population Profile in the United States, 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Retrieved 3.19.2020.
- Additionally, more Native Hawaiians in Hawai'i report caregiving for a person with health conditions or disabilities (23.5%) in comparison to the total state population (16.7%).

Source. Health Data Warehouse, Hawai'i State Department of Health, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, [5-year estimates, 2013-2017]. <http://ibis.hhdw.org/ibisph-view/>