

Exploring an Appropriate Brain-Based Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

Informed Services Infrastructure for Hawai'i

“FASD is a Kākou Thing”

Performance and Evaluation Report:

SUMMARY BRIEF*

Year One of Three: Oct. 2024 to Sept. 2025

Hawai'i FASD Action Group

December 2025

Exploring Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) in Hawai'i

The report outlines the first year of a three-year project aimed at improving awareness, diagnosis, and care for individuals affected by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) in Hawai'i.

Preface and Leadership Philosophy

Leadership in Hawai'i emphasizes interconnectedness and community responsibility in addressing FASD.

- Recognizes the fragility and power of community connections.
- Emphasizes compassion, curiosity, and community as core values.
- Acknowledges the complexity of FASD and the need for a compassionate response.
- Encourages transparency and reflective practice among professionals involved.

Executive Summary of Project Goals

The project aims to enhance public awareness and support for the FASD community in Hawai'i.

- FASD presents complex challenges affecting physical, cognitive, and behavioral health.
- Act 192 (2023) provides funding for a three-year initiative to address FASD.
- Goals include increasing awareness, diagnoses, and developing a co-managed system of care.
- Recommendations align with national FASD advocacy efforts, including creating a state task force and integrating FASD-informed care.

Recommendations for Project Improvement

Suggestions are made to enhance community representation and training tracking.

- Increase community representation, especially in advisory roles.

- Consider adding cost and qualitative analyses for evaluation purposes due to high use of volunteers.
- Improve tracking of training sessions and feedback from participants.
- Seek additional support for specialized FASD training.

Acknowledgments of Support

The project is supported by community donations and legislative funding.

- Funded primarily through the Office of Planning Policy and Program Development (OPPPD).
- Legislative support from Senator Joy San Buenaventura and Representative Terez Amato.

Introduction to the Project

The initiative responds to Act 192, establishing a pilot program for FASD care in Hawai‘i.

- Aims to create a co-managed system of care for FASD diagnosis and treatment.
- HIFASDAG was formed in 2016 and became a nonprofit in 2020.
- Mission: Raise awareness and support for individuals and families affected by FASD.

Rationale for Addressing FASD

FASD is highly prevalent in Hawai‘i, with significant economic implications.

- Estimated prevalence: 1 in 20 live births, affecting approximately 70,793 individuals.
- Lifetime costs per affected individual exceed \$2 million, totaling \$870 million annually for Hawai‘i.
- FASD is preventable, and effective public health policies can reduce associated costs.

Initiative Description and Objectives

The project focuses on creating a co-management system for FASD care.

- Five primary objectives include conducting assessments, developing screening protocols, and preparing supportive policies.
- Year one focused on the first two objectives, with progress made in cross-sector entry points.

Evaluation Focus and Methods

The evaluation assesses alignment with project goals and timelines.

- Key metrics include task completion rates and stakeholder satisfaction.
- Emphasis on shifting public perception towards compassionate responses to FASD.

Objective 1: Advisory Council Formation

An advisory body was established to guide the project with diverse expertise.

- Comprised of specialists in behavioral health, social services, and community organizing.
- Monthly meetings facilitated project development and strategic planning.

Objective 1: Public Awareness Campaign

A campaign was launched to raise awareness about FASD in the community.

- Themed “FASD is a Kākou Thing” to emphasize community responsibility.
- Utilized newsletters, social media, and events to disseminate information.
- Collaborated with various organizations to enhance outreach and impact.

Objective 1: Statewide Workforce Survey

A survey assessed healthcare providers' readiness to screen for FASD.

- Conducted from February to March 2025, targeting over 200 providers.
- Key findings indicated a high recognition of FASD's seriousness but low familiarity with screening tools.
- 77% of respondents deemed screening for children very important.

Objective 2: Collaborations and Partnerships

Training and resource development were prioritized in year one.

- Collaborated with the State Department of Health for FASD training sessions.
- Engaged with various organizations to support mental health needs post-wildfires.
- Training covered prenatal alcohol exposure, behavioral presentations, and systemic considerations unique to Hawai'i.

Training Evaluation and Feedback

Feedback from training sessions conducted from April to October 2025 indicates high satisfaction among participants.

- 127 trainees provided feedback through a 6-item online questionnaire.
- 96% reported learning something new from the training.
- 69% felt more confident discussing Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD).
- 52% identified a role for themselves in FASD work.

Community Engagement and Events

The organization actively participated in community events to raise awareness about FASD and support local initiatives.

- Involvement in the 13th annual “Celebration of Aloha” golf tournament and concert in September 2025.
- Proceeds from the event benefited Malama O Nā Keiki, supporting care for neonates in Hawai'i.
- The Action Group sponsored alcohol-free beverages to promote community discussions on alcohol use.

Collaborations and Partnerships Development

Efforts are underway to establish Hawai'i's first Certified FASD Specialist (C-FASDS) credential to enhance professional standards.

- The credential aims to set standards for prevention, screening, diagnosis, and FASD-informed care.

- The plan includes three months of curriculum design followed by two rounds of nine-month cohort training.
- Core content will cover FASD science, stigma, cultural implications, and case management.

Recommendations for Future Improvements

The project outlines several recommendations to enhance its effectiveness and community representation.

- Increase community representation at the advisory level to better address the needs of those affected by FASD.
- Improve data collection to track all trainees and gather feedback on presentations.
- Consider fiscal analysis for resource allocation and qualitative analysis to understand shifts in public perception.

Conclusion on Project Approach

The project emphasizes a compassionate and community-centered approach to addressing FASD.

- A shift in narrative is necessary to dismantle stigma and improve treatment access.
- The focus on strength-based wellbeing is culturally appropriate for Hawai'i and essential for effective service delivery.
- Raising awareness is crucial for FASD prevention and promoting maternal and fetal health.

*Support by AI Technology

For FULL Report please go to:

<https://fasdhawaii.org/fasd-resources/>

