

Hotline available for HIDOE student-related health questions and telehealth visits

29-Apr-2020

HIDOE students and families will have access to a new health hotline and telehealth services provided by the Hawai'i Keiki: Healthy and Ready to Learn Program to deliver equitable access to health resources and care for HIDOE students using mobile devices and interactive technology. The health hotline can be reached at (844) 436-3888 (toll free) Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., excluding holidays.

Toll free: (844) 436-3888

Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., excluding holidays

Hawai'i State Department of Education (HIDOE) students and families will have access to a new health hotline and telehealth services provided by the Hawai'i Keiki: Healthy and Ready to Learn Program (HK), effective Friday, May 1. These new services will deliver equitable access to health resources and care for HIDOE students using mobile devices and interactive technology.

A partnership between HIDOE and the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene, the HK program offers school-based health services during the academic year and provides nursing coverage to every complex area in the state. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic moving classes to online learning, HK will offer a no-cost health hotline and telehealth visits as an extension of services provided to students in the traditional school health room.

"This partnership helps to ensure continuity of care for public school students during this unprecedented health crisis," Deputy Superintendent Phyllis Unebasami said. "Students and families can call the health hotline from anywhere. They will receive health guidance and may be scheduled for a telehealth visit when appropriate. Students will be referred to the appropriate medical and/or mental health care when indicated."

The health hotline can be reached at (844) 436-3888 (toll free) and is available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., excluding holidays. HIDOE students and families who call the hotline will speak with an HK registered nurse (RN) or nurse practitioner (APRN). The nurse will perform a basic triage assessment over the phone regarding the caller's health concern or question about their child. The caller

may receive basic health advice or information and, with parental consent, the student may be scheduled for a telehealth visit with an HK nurse practitioner. Nurses staffing the hotline have been working in schools statewide and are familiar with many families and students. Families may request to make an appointment with a specific HK nurse practitioner.

Callers scheduled for a telehealth visit with an HK nurse practitioner will receive a link by email or on their mobile phone prior to the visit. To connect with the nurse, the caller simply clicks the link.

Telehealth is the safe and confidential delivery of health care services using interactive technology. Students' information will be kept private in compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) guidelines. At a minimum, callers will need access to a telephone.

The health hotline and telehealth visits will be provided at no cost to HIDOE students. Families with medical insurance will be asked to provide their insurance information, but HK will not bill or collect co-pays from families.

In the last decade, telehealth has been integrated into school-based health care. "Nationally, many school-based health centers have transitioned to telehealth in response to the COVID-19 pandemic," said Margo Lulich, HK executive director. "Health hotlines and telehealth are innovative ways to continue to provide safe, quality care to students while they are away from school."

HK nurses will screen for general health concerns and can connect students with other service providers such as HIDOE support staff such counselors, social workers, school psychologists or other medical referrals.

The health hotline and telehealth visits do not replace a student's primary care provider but provide families with an alternative way to access health services while supporting social distancing. HK will be sending a note to primary care providers for the telehealth visit. By calling the health hotline, HIDOE students and families can be assured they will speak with a nurse who will answer health questions about their children.

