



DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

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**PROJECT MĀLAMA KĀKOU - HAWAII SEXUAL ASSAULT
KIT INITIATIVE (SAKI) WEBSITE LAUNCHES TODAY**

HONOLULU – Attorney General Doug Chin and the State of Hawaii’s Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (Hawaii SAKI) Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) today announced the launch of a new website under *Project Mālama Kākou*.

Project Mālama Kākou was created as a result of Act 207 (2016), which brought together a statewide multidisciplinary team of victim service providers, crime lab personnel, police officials, and prosecutors to comprehensively reform the testing of sexual assault kits in Hawaii in a caring and victim-centered manner.

The website (ag.hawaii.gov/hisaki), is a valuable resource for sexual assault survivors who had a kit collected but do not know if it was tested for DNA evidence. Survivors will have the option of calling their local police department or going to the website to begin the process of determining the status of their kits. Survivors may also be connected with support services by contacting a local service provider listed on the website.

Attorney General Doug Chin said: “Connecting survivors with support services through *Project Mālama Kākou* is critical to empowering them and fulfilling the commitment to a victim-centered approach to the testing of sexual assault kits in Hawaii.”

Representative Linda Ichiyama said: “The Hawaii SAKI website is an important first step to help survivors understand what happened to their sexual assault kit and the process now being used to test these kits. As the Women’s Legislative Caucus continues to work on this issue, I hope that survivors will visit the website and use the information to learn the status of their sexual assault kit.”

Dani Riggs, Clinical Director, Child and Family Services, Maui Sexual Assault Center said: “Our Mālama Kākou team knows that information heals and wants to provide easy access to the most accurate and updated information possible. We want to make sure that anyone impacted by the work of our project team gets the best care and most compassionate treatment possible.”

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The website includes a description of Project Mālama Kākou - Hawaii's Solution for Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kits, a listing of the SAKI team members, Frequently Asked Questions, a dashboard reflecting the number of kits submitted for testing, information on survivor notification, and related information and services for survivors.

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State of Hawaii Department of the Attorney General
Hawaii Sexual Assault Kit Initiative

**Frequently Asked Questions from the
Project Mālama Kākou Website**

FAQ #1

Why weren't kits tested in the past?

Traditionally, DNA evidence in kits were tested in order to identify or confirm the identity of suspects in individual cases of sexual violence, or to identify or confirm the identity of suspects across multiple cases in specific situations (for example, if a serial offender was suspected). In addition, DNA evidence may also have been tested to corroborate or confirm other evidence, such as a victim statement or crime scene evidence. When eligible, the DNA profiles obtained in this testing process would be uploaded to the FBI's Combined DNA Index System, where they could be helpful in matching an offender to other previous or future cases.

However, testing was not performed, for example, in cases where a suspect was identified through better evidence than the kit, such as a confession or evidence collected from the crime scene (this could include DNA evidence), or where corroboration or confirmation of other evidence by testing the kit was not considered necessary. Testing was also not performed in cases where a survivor declined to participate in the case for various reasons.

Historically, testing of kits was further limited by technological, staffing, and funding limitations, and the need to share testing resources with other types of crime cases such as murders.

FAQ #2

Why test more kits now?

It is possible to test more kits than it was in the past with the development of better DNA testing technology and best practices for addressing stored untested kits based on large scale, federally funded studies; the expanded availability of laboratory capacity and funding from both federal and state sources; and a national shift in how sexual violence is addressed.

FAQ #3

Why not automatically test all stored kits?

In the investigation and prosecution of sexual violence crimes, the needs of the reporting survivor must take priority in order to ensure that they are able to come forward and report these crimes without fearing additional, unnecessary trauma. Sometimes survivors may report a sexual assault, but decide against pursuing the case further. This is an important exercise of their rights and should be respected.

Therefore, in a case where a kit was collected and a police report was made but later formally withdrawn, the kit will not automatically be tested. This respects the right of the survivor to decide whether or not to participate in the criminal justice process.

In addition, kits will not be automatically tested in cases where the offender has been found guilty of a felony. The reason for this is that in such cases, felony conviction results in the collection of DNA from the offenders which are uploaded to the FBI's Combined DNA Index System and are already available for comparison across cases and jurisdictions.

FAQ #4

What will happen to stored kits that are not automatically tested?

It is important to note that some kits were disposed of in the past due to normal evidence storage and disposal practices. However, if police have retained a kit in storage and it is not going to be automatically tested in the Project Mālama Kākou process, it can still be tested at the survivor's request.

Survivors who formally withdrew their complaint and would like to have their kit tested, or who would like to discuss possibly reinstating their previous report, are encouraged to contact Project Mālama Kākou to discuss the current status of their kit:

FAQ #5

What if there was no report to the police?

If a survivor had an evidence kit collected in their case but did not make a report to the police, the kit may have been retained in storage, either by the sexual

assault center program that performed the forensic medical examination service or by the police.

At a survivor's request, a report of a sexual assault related to those kits may still be made to the police and the kit, if it was retained in storage, may still be submitted for testing.

Survivors who had a kit collected but did not make a report to the police, and who may be interested in making a police report at this time, can contact Project Mālama Kākou to discuss the current status of their kit:

For additional information, you may go to the Hawaii SAKI website at:

Website Link: <http://ag.hawaii.gov/hisaki/>