



Hawai'i Primary Care Association

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS: HAWAI'I'S LARGEST HEALTH CARE SAFETY NET

Community health centers around the state are a critically important, if sometimes overlooked, part of Hawai'i's health care system. Hawai'i's 13 community health centers on five islands cared for 98,536 people in 2006. A 14th community health center will open on Lana'i in 2008.

Community health centers are a different kind of health care provider:

- They are non-profit corporations and the majority of their board members use their services.
- They exist only in federally recognized underserved areas.
- They serve all patients without regard to ability to pay.
- They specialize in helping people overcome barriers to health care.
- They provide a wide array of necessary health services.

Community health centers provide high quality care and save money:

- Medicaid patients served by community health centers are 22% less likely to be hospitalized for avoidable conditions.*
- Community health centers save the Medicaid program 30% in annual spending, per beneficiary, due to reduced specialty care referrals and fewer hospitalizations or emergency room visits.
- Uninsured adults who go to community health centers are more likely to get counseling on diet, exercise, smoking, substance abuse, and STDs.*
- Women who go to community health centers are significantly more likely to get mammograms, clinical breast exams, and Pap smears.*
- In Hawai'i, community health centers serve the hardest to reach populations at an average cost of only \$848 per patient per year.

Hawai'i community health center patient profile (2006):

- 29% were Native Hawaiian.
- 25% were Caucasian.
- 20% were Asian.
- 14% were Pacific Islanders (other than Native Hawaiian).
- 15% needed interpreters.
- 71% had incomes below 100% of poverty; 83% had incomes below 200% of poverty.
- 72,523 were rural and 26,013 were urban.
- 30% were uninsured.
- 40% had Medicaid or QUEST coverage.
- 10,689 were homeless.

Hawai'i community health center financial support (2006):

- 58% of revenue came from patient fees (notably Med-QUEST payments).
- 15% of revenue came from state contracts and grants.
- 19% of revenue came from federal grants.
- 6% of revenue came from foundations and donations.

Hawai'i community health centers are economic engines in depressed areas (2006):

- Directly contributed \$84.3 million to the economy and employed 1,040 people.
- Indirectly contributed \$167.7 million and supported 1,768 jobs.

* *"Inequality in America: The Contribution of Health Centers in Reducing and Eliminating Health Disparities in Access to Care."* Medical Care Research and Review, June 2001.

What is the Role of Community Health Centers?

Community health centers (CHCs) are the mainstay of the health care safety net. They are allowed to exist only in federally recognized areas where residents are most likely to have barriers to getting health care. Also critically important is the fact that they are nonprofit organizations governed by the people who use their services.

What do Community Health Centers Do?

The people in the areas served by CHCs have a variety of health needs, including medical, dental, and mental health. Frequently patients who have no private insurance or who have language or cultural barriers to care have neglected needed health care for some time so that clinical visits are more intense and need to address a variety of ailments. They often also need assistance with a host of other issues that would interfere with good health including housing, financial assistance, referral to other programs, health education, culturally appropriate language assistance, and transportation. Outreach and follow-up are necessary to ensure that some people get the care they need and understand clinicians' instructions for follow-up. Community health centers typically address all these needs.

Community health centers serve people who have disproportionately high rates of diabetes, asthma, hypertension, and behavioral health problems. In response, CHCs are in the forefront for offering excellent chronic disease care and management. They also are the primary health care provider for Hawai'i's homeless populations, and several centers serve significant numbers of people with HIV/AIDS. Comprehensive services include:

- Medical and mental health clinical care (many patients have neglected needed health care so that clinical visits are often more intense than routine visits and need to address a variety of ailments). Eleven of fourteen CHCs are or will soon be providing dental care.
- Prescription drugs.
- Diagnostic services.
- Case management (most patients have socioeconomic needs that also need to be addressed and require more assistance with follow-up care).
- Language assistance and culturally competent care (15% of all patients need interpreter services and 29% are Native Hawaiian).
- Assistance with Med-QUEST, housing, and cash assistance applications.
- Health education for disease management and prevention.

Where are Community Health Centers in Hawai'i?

Big Island:	Bay Clinic, Hāmākua Health Center, and West Hawai'i Community Health Center serve Hilo, Kea'au, Puna, Ka'ū, Honoka'a, North Kohala, and Kailua, Kona.
Maui:	Community Clinic of Maui and Hāna Community Health Center serve Kahului, Wailuku, Lāhainā, and Hāna.
Moloka'i:	Moloka'i 'Ohana Health Care serves the island of Moloka'i.
Lāna'i:	(Opening in 2008) Lāna'i Community Health Center will serve all of Lāna'i.
O'ahu:	Kalihi-Pālana Health Center, Kōkua Kalihi Valley, Ko'olauloa Community Health & Wellness Center, Wai'anae Coast Comprehensive Health Center, Waikīkī Health Center, Waimānalo Health Center serve Waimānalo, urban Honolulu, Waipahu, Kapolei, the Wai'anae coast, and the North Shore.
Kaua'i:	Ho'ola Lāhui Hawai'i (Kaua'i Community Health Center) serves all of Kaua'i.

The Hawai'i Primary Care Association (HPCA) is a nonprofit organization, funded largely by the Bureau of Primary Health Care. Our mission is to strengthen systems of care in Hawaii for communities in need. Among the activities of the HPCA are training and peer networking; marketplace analysis and statewide strategic planning; the Medicine Bank – La'au Makana; the Hawai'i Immigrant Health Initiative; Hawai'i Covering Kids; community development; telehealth and health care technology; and community health worker training.

For more information, contact

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