

Access to healthcare plays a vital role in the health of individuals and of the population. Healthy People 2010 identify access to care as a leading indicator of health. According to the Institute of Medicine (1993) “access to health care is the timely use of personal health services to achieve the best possible health outcomes.” This definition, underscores the importance of “timeliness” as a feature of good access to care. However, timeliness is more difficult to measure than simple ratios of physicians to the population.

Hawaii County Has the Lowest Ratio of Physicians

Hawaii County has the lowest ratio of licensed physicians to 1,000 population compared to the other counties as shown in Figure 19. Because many of the licensed physicians are not actively practicing, the actual ratios are likely to be lower.

Hawaii County has 14% of the State’s Population, but only 5% of State’s Doctors

Hawaii County has 14% of the state’s population as shown in Figure 20 based on the U.S. Census as of March 2009. However, Hawaii County has only 5% of the states licensed physicians as shown in Figure 21.

Note: The mainland and foreign categories include physicians who have a license to practice in Hawaii, but use a mainland address as their primary address.

Source: Numerator from Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs – April 1, 2009. Denominator from U.S. Census March 19, 2009 population estimate. Licensed physicians may or may not be active.

Figure 19

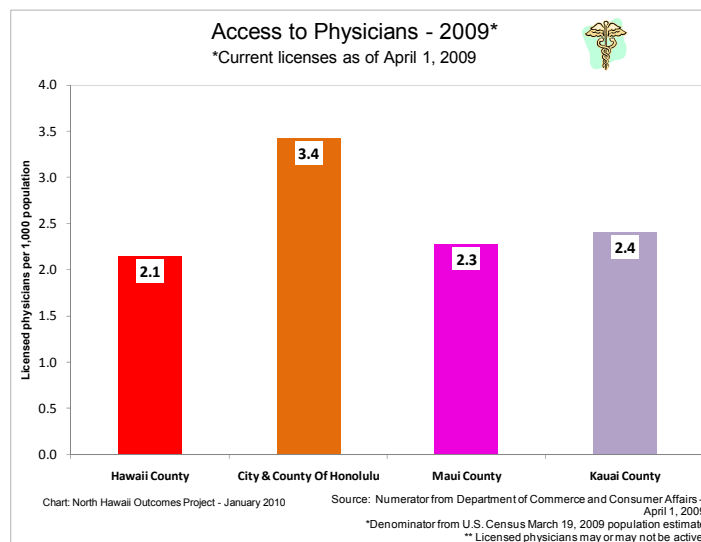


Figure 20

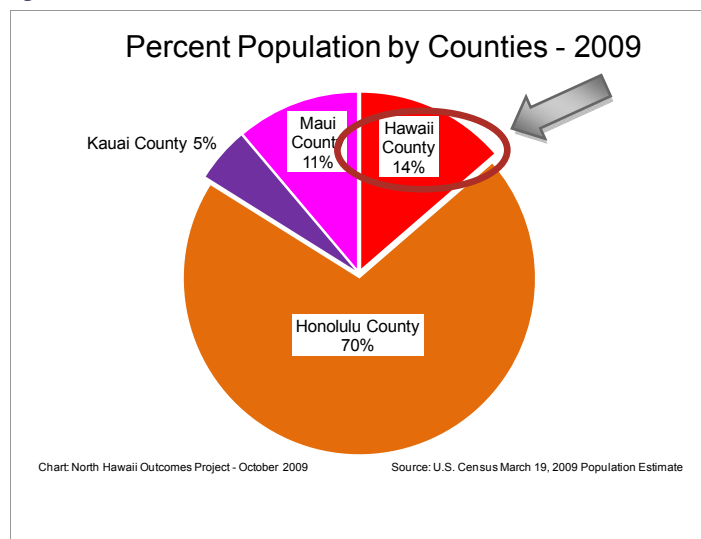
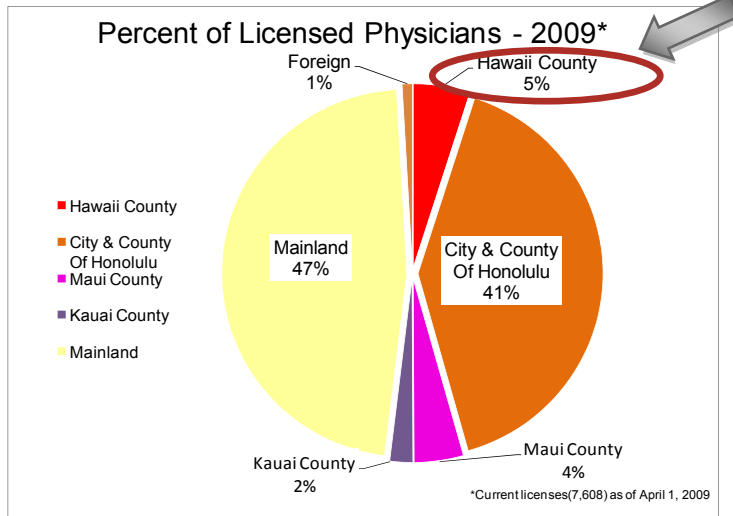


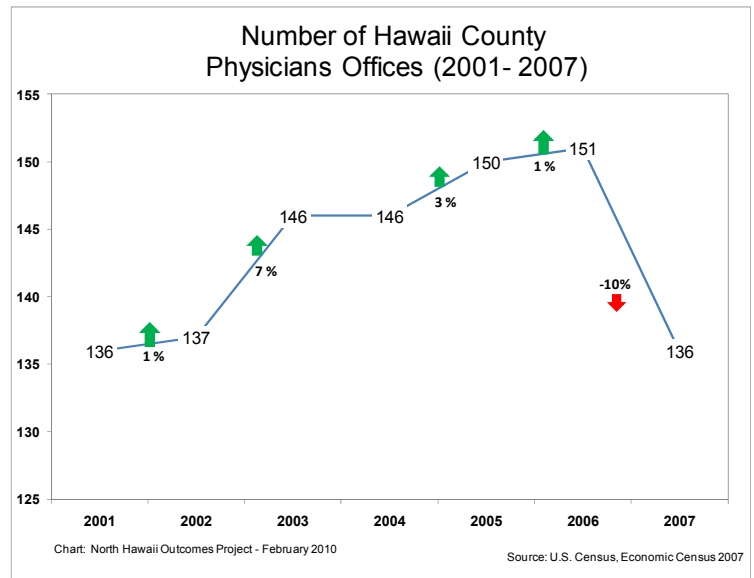
Figure 21



Declining Number of Physician Office in Hawaii County

The number of physicians' offices in Hawaii County declined substantially (from 151 to 136) between 2006 and 2007 according to the U.S. Economic Census data at www.census.gov.

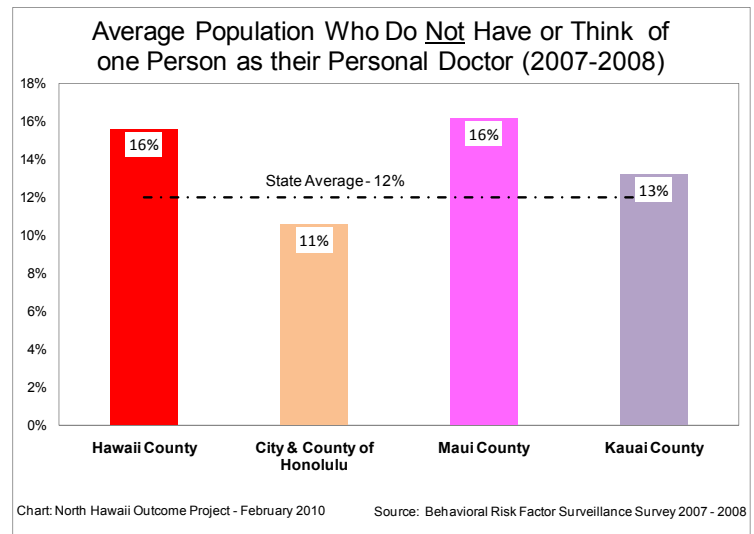
Figure 22



More Hawaii County Residents Without a Personal Doctor

More residents of Hawaii County do not have a personal doctor according to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (2007-2008).

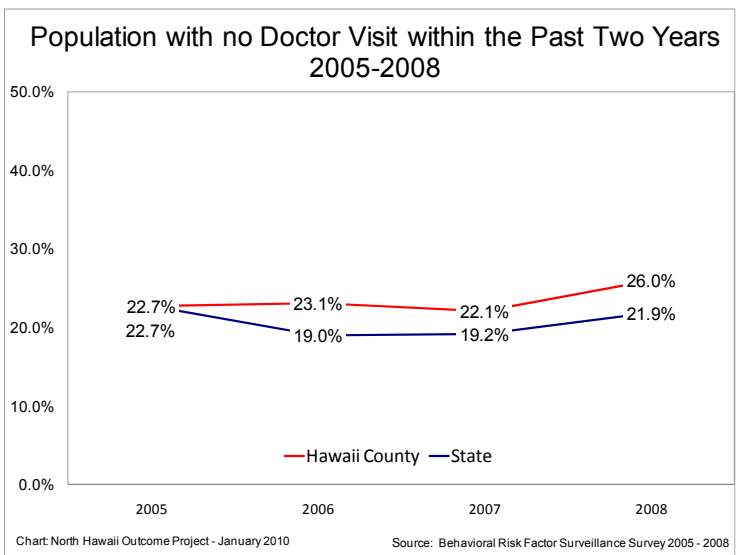
Figure 23



Fewer Hawaii County Residents Get Doctor Visits

More than one quarter of Hawaii County residents surveyed by BRFSS reported no doctor visit in the past two years. Figure 24 shows the percent in Hawaii County reporting no checkup increased by 4% for 2007-2008 and is higher for Hawaii County than the State.

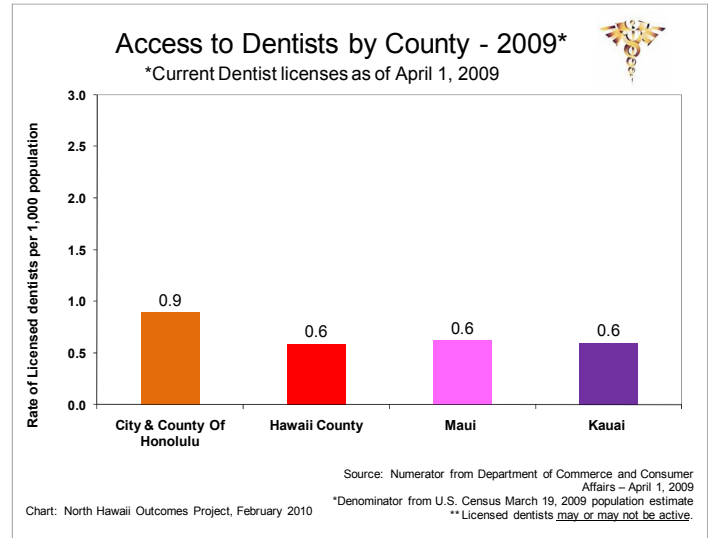
Figure 24



Fewer Dentists Compared to Honolulu

Hawaii County, like the other neighbor islands has a lower ratio of dentists per population. Inadequate access to dental care can impact cardiovascular health and premature labor, through chronic dental disease or gum disease.

Figure 25

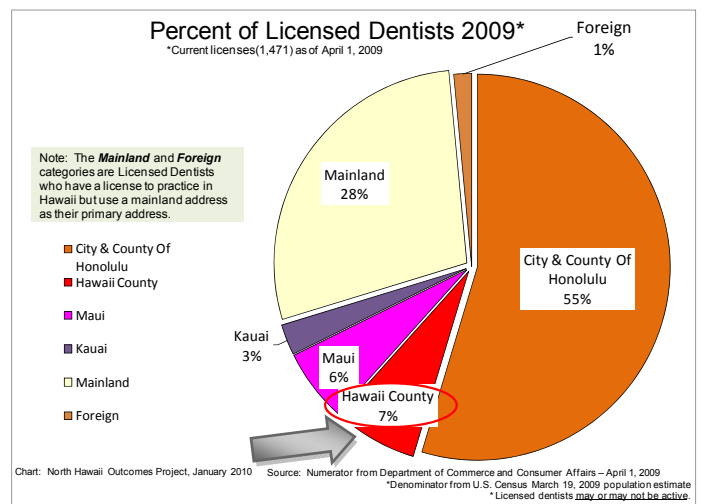


Hawaii County Has 14% of State's Population but Only 7% of State's Dentists

The lower ratio of dentist to population results in lower access to dental care.

Source: Numerator from Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs – April 1, 2009. Denominator from U.S. Census March 19, 2009 population estimate. Licensed physicians may or may not be active

Figure 26



Impact of Inadequate Access to Healthcare

People without health insurance or a primary care provider are less likely to get timely treatment, screening and preventive services and are more likely to use costly emergency services resulting in higher emergency room and hospitalization rates per 1,000 population for Hawaii County (See Health Trends, 2009).

Figure 27



Source: Institute of Health Improvement, John Wasson, M.D.

Higher Uninsured in Hawaii County

Hawaii County and Kauai County are essentially tied for the highest average percent of population who are uninsured for the years 2002-2008. The proportion of uninsured on all islands has risen with unemployment. Those who lack insurance are known to defer or delay healthcare. The Hawaii Uninsured Project (2003) showed that a larger proportion of the uninsured were “working uninsured.”

Native Hawaiians have Higher Rates of Uninsured

The Hawaii Uninsured Project also showed that “uninsured self identified Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders represent a disproportionate share of the uninsured in Hawaii, 14.5% compared to 9.5%.

Hawaii County Designated as a Medically Underserved Area and Population

Hawaii County has a federal designation as a medically underserved area and medically underserved population (Primary Care Needs Assessment, 2009).

Hawaii County Currently Has Shortage of 200 Doctors

According to the Hawaii County Physician workforce study 2010 by John A. Burns School of Medicine, Hawaii County currently faces a shortage of 200 physicians based on actual supply and calculated demand. This shortage most likely contributes to Hawaii County’s relatively high rate of hospitalizations per 1,000 population. (See http://www.healthtrends.org/healthutilize_acutecare.aspx)

Figure 28

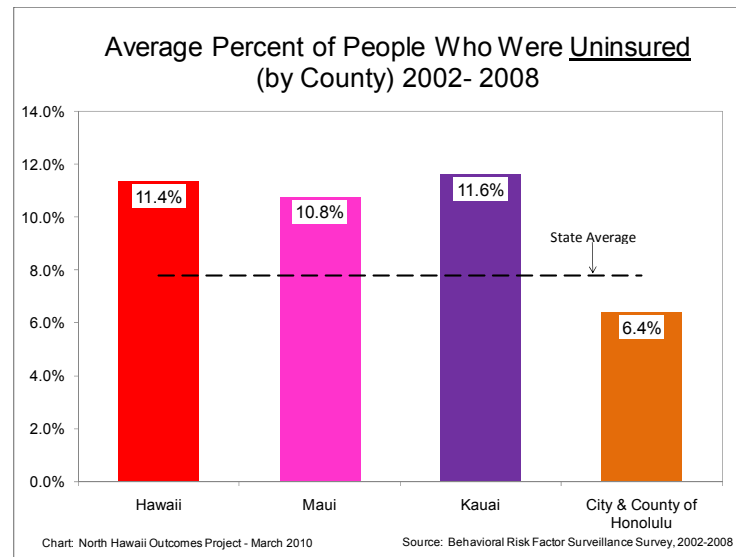


Figure 29

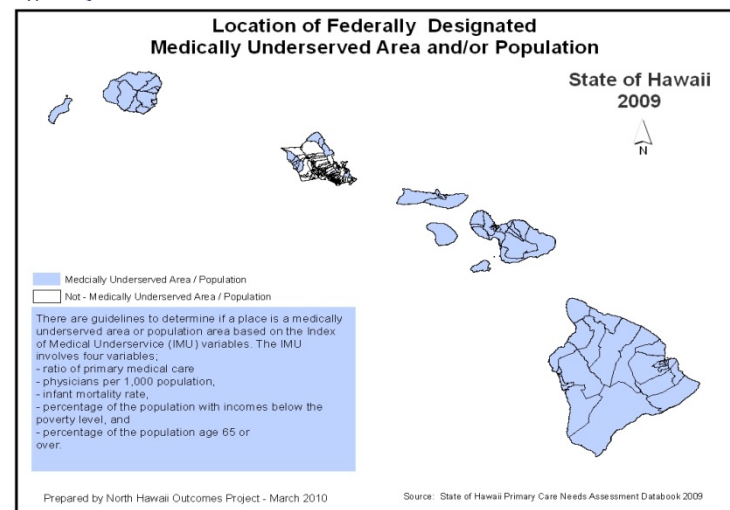


Figure 30

