

# Recommendations to Improve Access

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These recommendations are intended to build on the work of many of the organizations currently addressing the healthcare access problem in Hawaii County. These are the author's summary of recommendations, however, many of these recommendations come from multiple sources including the **John A. Burns School of Medicine, University of Hawaii at Manoa** (UH JABSOM) Workforce Forum, Mayors' Summits and the *Hawaii Island Healthcare Alliance*. This high level outline of key strategies is intended to be a preliminary list for both dialogue and action.

## ***Focus on growing an efficient healthcare workforce, especially primary care providers:***

### *Grow number of providers*

- Support growing our own primary care providers through support for the *University of Hawaii Family Practice Rural Residency Program* in Hilo.
- Strengthen the provider pipeline through work with Hawaii public and private schools;
- Support collaborative recruitment of specialists
- Increase access to Student Loan Repayment programs to attract young providers in part through expansion of Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) designations.
- Improve, stream line and shorten the provider licensing and credentialing processes.

### *Grow capacity to hire providers and improve productivity*

- Improve the capacity of Hawaii County healthcare employers to recruit, hire and retain primary care providers; Grow group practice and "staff model" practices.
- Improve capacity to mentor young providers.
- Improve provider capacity to effectively use technology and provider skills in clinical transformation through the *Hawaii Island Beacon Community Grant*.
- Support development of primary care teams with more effective use of non-physician clinicians (physician assistants, nurse practitioners and certified nurse midwives).
- Reduce policy and administrative barriers to effective use of non-physician clinicians.
- Support workforce development and training for ancillary health professionals.
- Support effective use of technology alternatives to in-person visits, where appropriate.

## ***Reduce fragmentation of stakeholders; catalyze a network of collaboration; develop shared aims:***

- Support island wide efforts to reduce fragmentation and increase communication and systems perspective through *Hawaii Island Healthcare Alliance, Hawaii Island Beacon Community, State Office of Rural Health* and *Hawaii Health Systems Corporation*.
- Support island wide acute hospital collaboration, through the *Big Island Hospital Collaborative* to provide core services on-island, support regional planning for core services and partnerships for transfer when appropriate.
- Support island wide collaboration through *Hawaii Island Beacon Community* to use population health information to continuously improve healthcare delivery and quality.
- Support island wide collaboration to improve maternal child health improvements through, *Hawaii Collaborative Health Initiative (HI- CHI)*.
- Support island wide collaboration to improve services for seniors, especially services which support seniors to remain in the community.

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## ***Support stakeholder alignment on high leverage healthcare policy change:***

- Support state and community funding of *UH Family Practice Rural Residency Program* in Hilo.
- Increase awareness of the healthcare access problem in Hawaii County, its human and financial impact especially the associated higher cost of higher Emergency Room and hospital utilization. Increase awareness of the impending impact of population aging which will dramatically increase demand for healthcare services.
- Support a rural payment differential for Neighbor Island providers.
- Increase Federal Health Professional Shortage designations in Hawaii County - to increase access to federal funds for loan repayment and 10% Medicare increase for primary care.
- Support reducing the barriers to financially sustainable hospitals and providers by reducing the gap between cost of providing care and reimbursement and by recalculating Hawaii Geographic Practice Cost Indices (GPCIs) for Medicare.
- Continue to investigate federal "Island" designation.

## ***Support economic development of the healthcare sector in Hawaii County:***

- Leverage the well-recognized economic multiplier effect of growth of the healthcare sector to address the simultaneous Hawaii County need for jobs and economic development.
- Develop health enterprise zones in Hawaii County to stimulate economic development of the healthcare sector.

## ***Reduce demand for healthcare services:***

- Support consumer and community engagement in maintaining and improving healthy lifestyles.
- Support appropriate use of palliative and support services.