

# Access to Healthcare

## Inadequate Access to Healthcare in Hawaii County

Access to healthcare plays a vital role in the health of individuals and of the population. Healthy People 2020 identifies access to healthcare 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."

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.

## Higher Uninsured in Hawaii County

Estimates of the uninsured population vary substantially depending on the source. Hawaii County and Kauai County are essentially tied for the highest average percent of uninsured population for the years 2009-2010, according to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (see Figure 26). The proportion of uninsured on all islands has risen with rising unemployment.

## Hawaii County Has Nearly 15% of Adults Uninsured

In 2010, 14.7% of adults in Hawaii County were uninsured, compared to 9.2% for the City and County of Honolulu, according to the American Community Survey, which is part of the U.S. Census (see Figure 27).

Figure 25



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

Figure 26

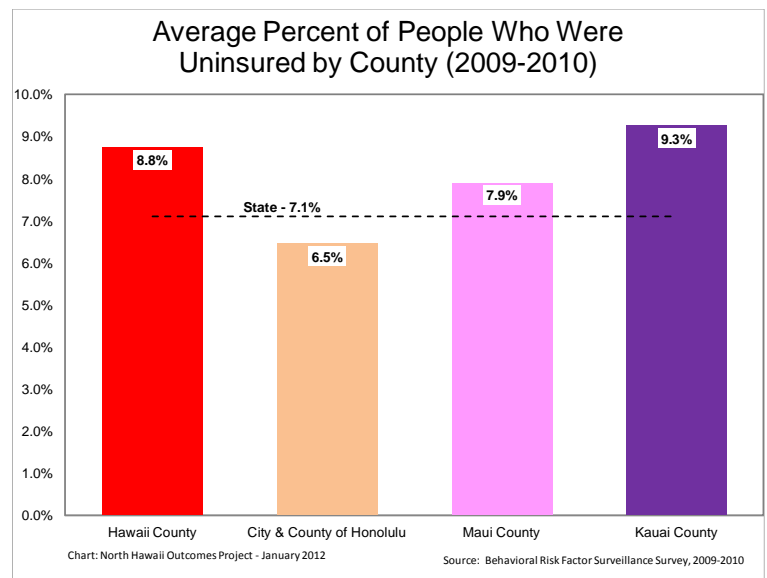
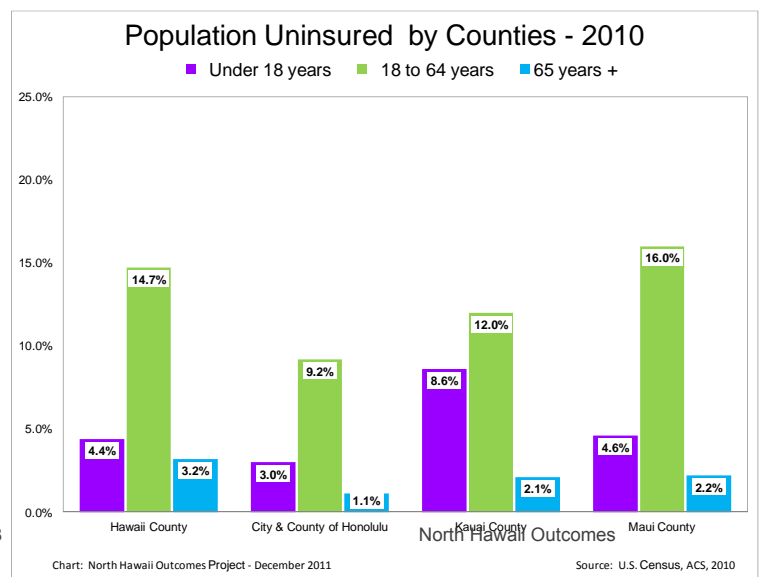


Figure 27



## Lowest Ratio of Physicians to Population in Hawaii County

Hawaii County has the lowest ratio of licensed physicians per 100,000 population compared to the other counties (see Figure 28). Because many of the licensed physicians are not actively practicing, the actual ratios of practicing physicians are even lower.

## Hawaii County has 14% of the State's Population, but only 10% of the State's Physicians

Hawaii County has 14% of the state's population based on the U.S. Census 2010. However, Hawaii County has only 10% of the state's licensed physicians with a primary Hawaii address (see Figure 29).

### **Note:**

*The physician to population ratio in Hawaii is commonly overestimated when the total licensed physicians in Hawaii is used, because the total includes physicians who have a Hawaii license, but have a mainland or foreign primary address. Approximately half of the physicians with a Hawaii license do not have a primary Hawaii address.*

*The second source of the common misconception that Hawaii has an adequate physician supply is the American Medical Association (AMA) database used by many national estimates of access. The AMA database uses the total licensed physicians, rather than licensed physicians with a primary Hawaii address.*

Figure 28

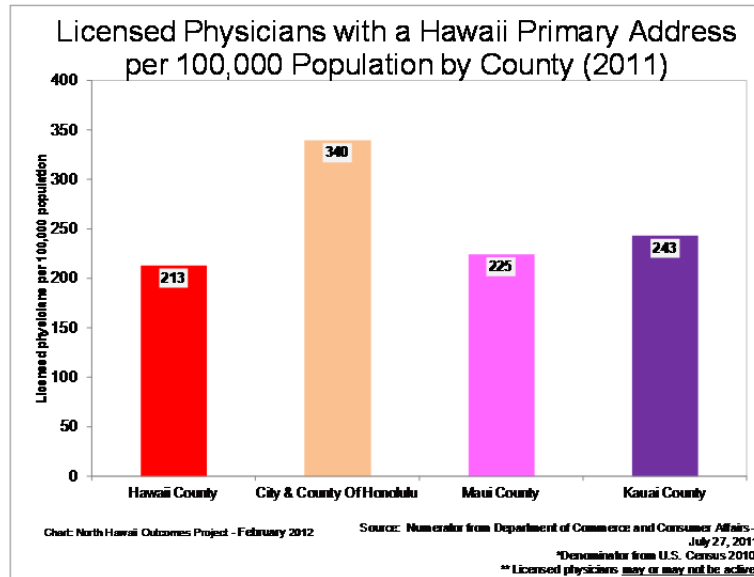


Figure 29

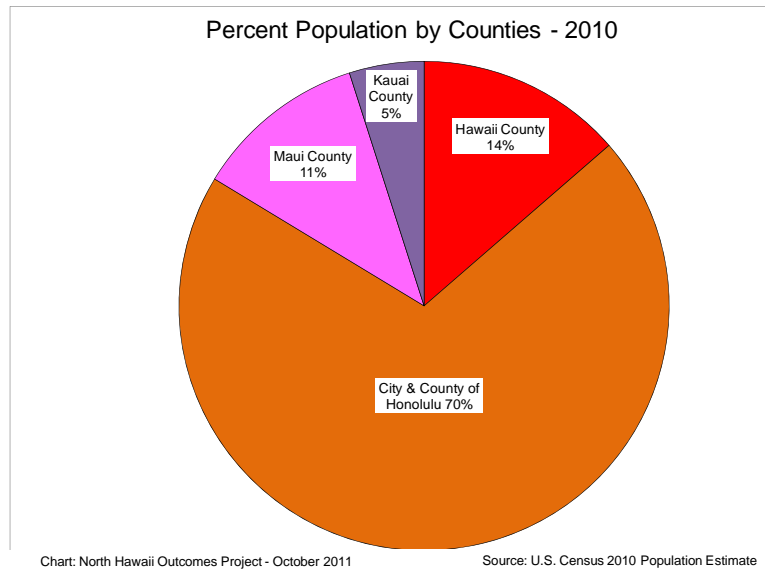
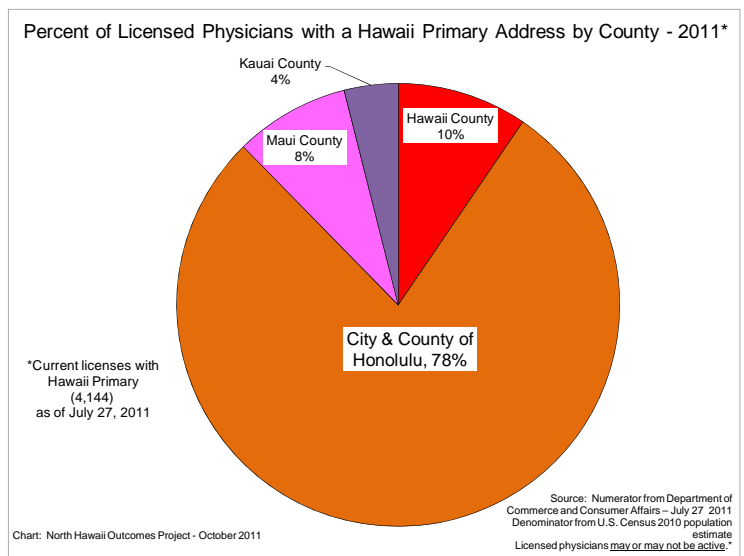


Figure 30

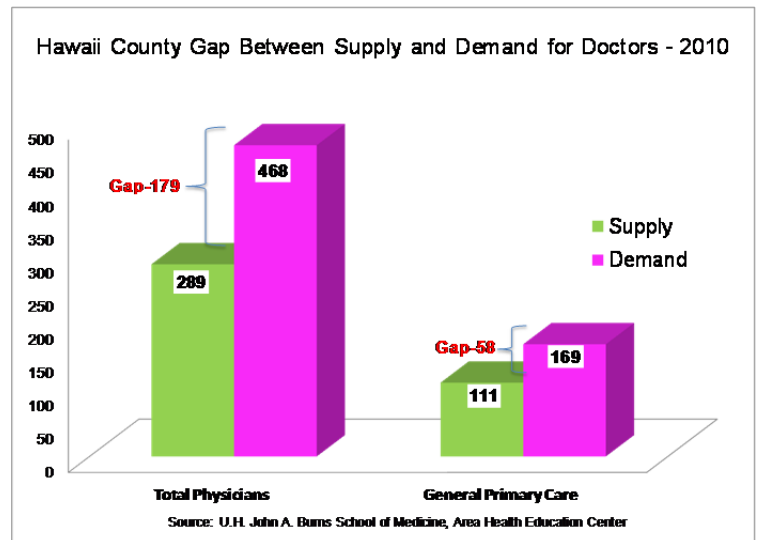


## Hawaii County 179 Physicians Short

Hawaii County currently faces a shortage of 179 physicians, based on actual supply and calculated demand, according to the Hawaii Physician Workforce Study 2010 by John A. Burns School of Medicine <sup>13</sup> (see Figure 31).

This shortage most likely contributes to Hawaii County's relatively high rate of hospitalizations per 1,000 population, as well as the higher rate of hospitalizations for diabetes (See [www.healthtrends.org/healthutilize\\_acutecare.aspx](http://www.healthtrends.org/healthutilize_acutecare.aspx) <sup>14</sup> (see Figure 39 on page 22).

Figure 31

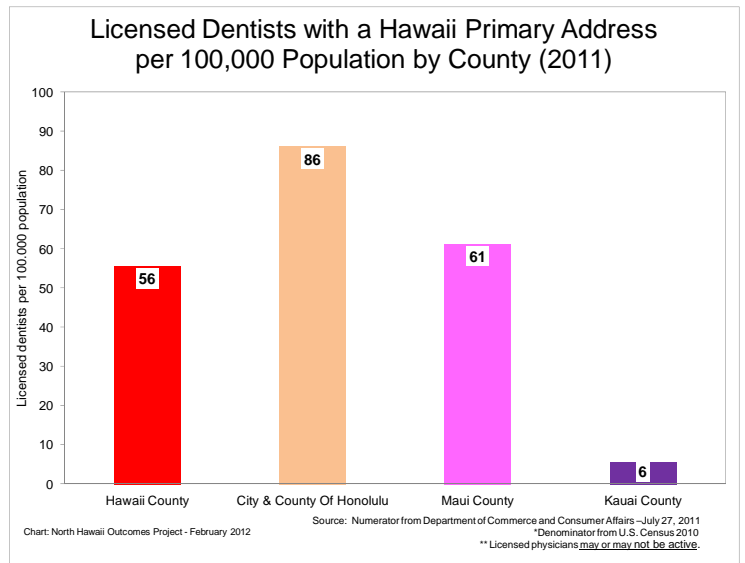


## Fewer Dentists Compared to Honolulu

Hawaii County, like the other neighbor islands, has a lower ratio of dentists per population than the City and County of Honolulu.

Kauai County appears to have an even more severe shortage of dentists than Hawaii County does (see Figure 32).

Figure 32

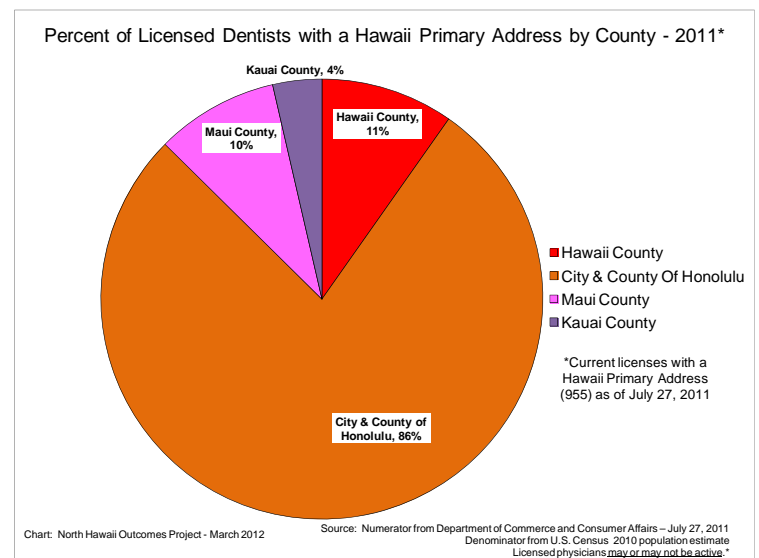


## Hawaii County Has 14% of the State's Population, but only 10% of the State's Dentists

Hawaii County has 14% of the state's population, but only 10% of the state's dentists with a primary Hawaii address (see Figure 33).

The lower ratio of dentists to population results in less access to dental care. In addition to impact on teeth and gums, inadequate access to dental care impacts cardiovascular health and premature labor, because of inflammation from untreated chronic dental disease or gum disease.

Figure 33

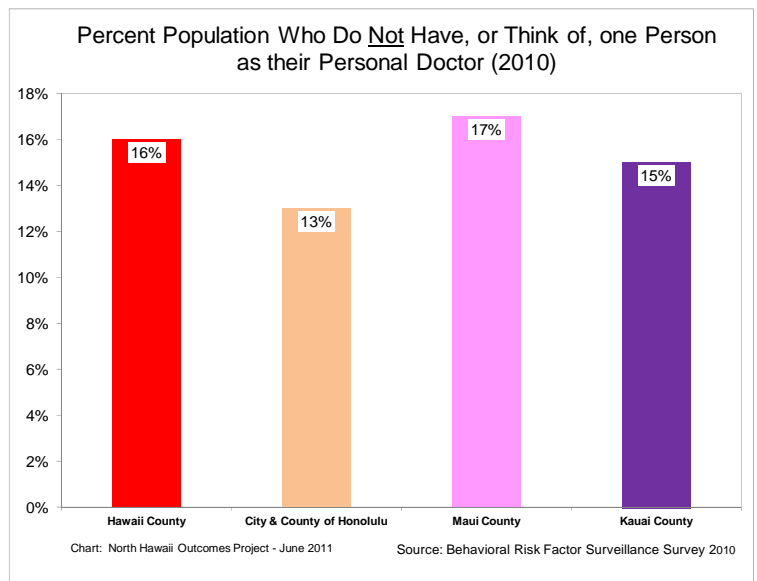


## More Hawaii County Residents without a Personal Doctor

More residents of Hawaii County do not have a personal doctor according to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (2010).

For Hawaii County, 16% of those surveyed in 2010 said they did not have a personal doctor. Since the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance survey is based on a home phone survey, and many people in Hawaii do not have a home phone, the proportion of people without a doctor may be even higher (see Figure 34).

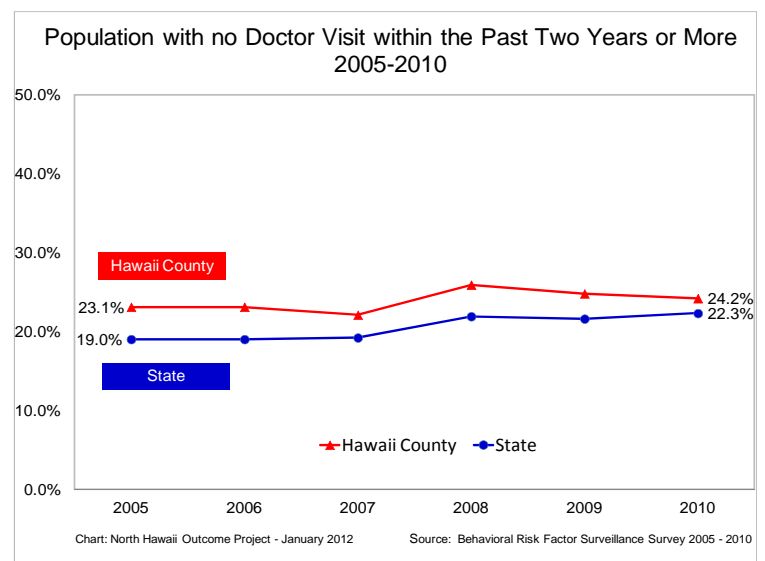
Figure 34



## More Hawaii County Residents Without Doctor Visits

About 25% of Hawaii County residents surveyed by BRFSS in 2010 reported no doctor visit in the past two years. The proportion of the population in Hawaii County and in the state reporting no doctor visits increased between 2005-2010 (see Figure 35).

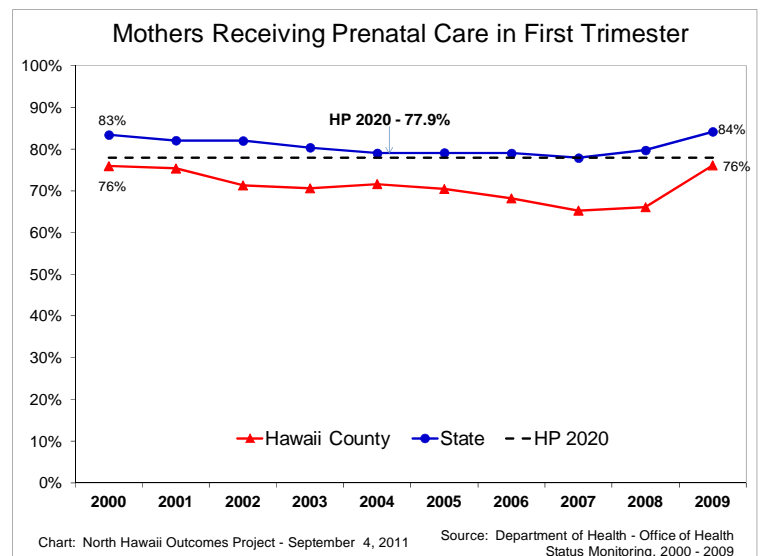
Figure 35



## Fewer Hawaii County Women Receiving Prenatal Care

Prenatal care of pregnant women in the first three months of pregnancy is highly correlated with better outcomes and is a reflection of access to care, as well as awareness of the benefits. A smaller percent of Hawaii County women (76%) received first trimester care in 2009, compared to 84% for the state (see Figure 36).

Figure 36



One quarter of Hawaii County pregnant women are not receiving prenatal care. This lack of recommended prenatal care may be related to healthcare workforce shortages, increases in people without insurance and cultural issues.

## Fewer Hawaii County Women Had a Mammogram

Only 72.8% of Hawaii County women 40+ years surveyed had a mammogram, within the past two years compared to 78.9% for the state. Mammograms are important to detect breast cancers at an earlier more treatable stage (see Figure 37). Lower rates of mammograms in Hawaii County may be related to an inadequate primary care workforce, as well as cultural issues.

For more information on recommended screenings visit

[www.ahrq.gov/clinic/USpstfix.htm](http://www.ahrq.gov/clinic/USpstfix.htm)<sup>15</sup>

## Fewer Hawaii County Residents Screened for Colon Cancer

In 2010, slightly fewer Hawaii County residents compared to the state average (60% vs. 61%) reported they had been screened for colon cancer with a sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy, according to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance survey (see Figure 38).

Although there has been increased colon cancer screening at both the County and the State levels, about 40% of Hawaii County population are not getting the recommended screening.

## More Hospitalizations for Diabetes

The Hawaii County rate of hospital admissions for uncontrolled diabetes in 2009 was nearly twice the City and County of Honolulu rate per 1,000 population (7.38 vs. 3.88) (see Figure 39).

### Note:

*The healthcare provider shortage in Hawaii County is a key reason for the relatively higher rate of hospitalizations and potentially avoidable hospitalizations for uncontrolled diabetes.*

Figure 37

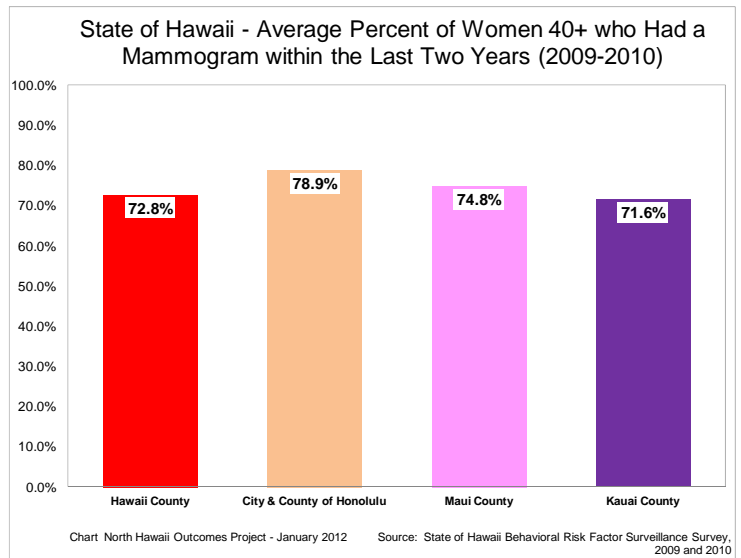


Figure 38

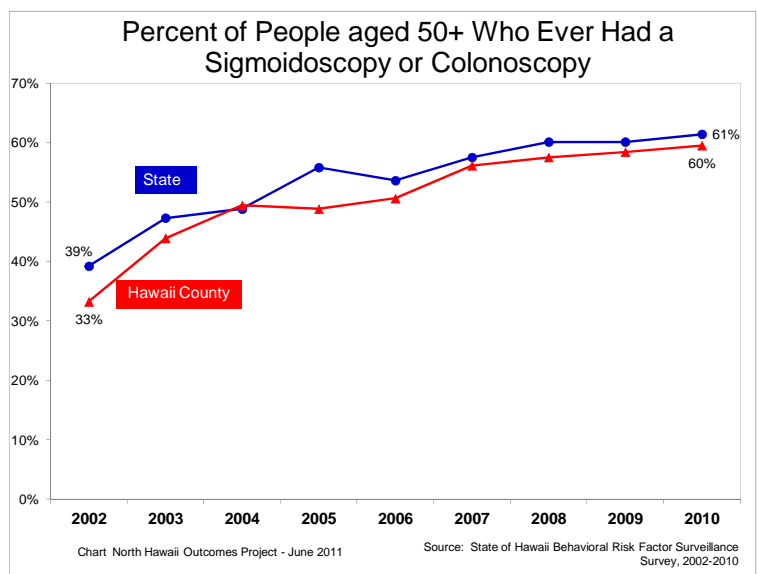


Figure 39

