

Guest Editors' Message: Hawai'i's Healthcare Workforce

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The Health Workforce Special Edition of the Hawai'i Journal of Medicine and Public Health highlights research on the growing challenges facing the healthcare workforce in Hawai'i. It features the most current and comprehensive information on Hawai'i's workforce supply and projected shortages to date for physicians and for the Public Health workforce, as well as provides insight into the Mental Health Workforce.

Establishing Successful Patient-Centered Medical Homes in Rural Hawai'i: Three Strategies to Consider reviews the challenges of establishing the medical home as posed by Hawai'i's unique geography, physician shortages, and dispersed population. The results of this qualitative study recommend three paths towards the effective implementation of the patient-centered medical home in Hawai'i.

Identifying Barriers in the Use of Electronic Health Records in Hawai'i examines the current state of EHR in Hawai'i, the barriers to adoption, and the future of Health Information Technology (HIT) initiatives to improve the health of Hawai'i's people.

Comparison of Primary Care Physician Reimbursement Rates in the US demonstrates how Hawai'i providers are reimbursed significantly lower than doctors in cities with similar cost of living by both Medicare and private insurance. Ideas such as making use of the 10% Medicare Bonus Program for physicians working in Health Professions Shortage Areas are offered for increasing physician payment.

Beyond the Ability to Pay: The Health Status of Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders in Relationship to Health Insurance offers insights into the unique issues the healthcare system will need to address to improve the health of Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders (NHOPI).

The final section of this edition provides insights and recommendations from those working toward becoming healthcare providers in Hawai'i, as well as a book review regarding the health issues that face women in military service.

We know this is a difficult time to be in healthcare. There are so many things changing, so many new requirements, and so many unknowns. But some things remain constant: the importance of the healing professions, the caring we have for and by our patients, and the central role we play in the lives of so many. So we want to offer insights into preventing burn out in case they come in handy for you. First of all, it can't all be done from inside only. Yes, we can all pay more attention to our needs, make more time for family and fun and take better care of ourselves. But it also depends on employers and insurers making some effort to acknowledge the work that healthcare providers put in, especially primary care providers. Despite lower pay than specialists, and possibly longer work days, primary care providers are essential to an effective and efficient health care system. It should also be acknowledged that electronic health records do not save time and so far cause more frustration and expense than they save. So, until these things are improved, we have some permissions for you:

- Permission to say "No"
- Permission to put family or fun first sometimes
- Permission to take a vacation
- Permission to NOT delay gratification once in a while
- Permission to brag about the things you have done to help people

And most of all, we want to thank you for caring for the patients of Hawai'i! We hope you enjoy this Workforce Edition! The Area Health Education Center (AHEC) regularly hosts focus groups and meetings to plan for countering the workforce shortages, so your feedback and involvement is always welcome. More information is available at <http://www.ahec.hawaii.edu/workforce>. Please contact Dr. Kelley Withy (withy@hawaii.edu) with any thoughts and comments. Mahalo!

