

**REPORT TO THE THIRTIETH LEGISLATURE
STATE OF HAWAII
2019**

**PURSUANT TO
SECTION 321-1.5(6)
HAWAII REVISED STATUTES
PRIMARY CARE INCENTIVE PROGRAM**

**PREPARED BY:
STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
HEALTH RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION
FAMILY HEALTH SERVICES DIVISION**

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HAWAII STATE
DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH

Hawaii State Department of Health
PRIMARY CARE OFFICE

The Hawaii Primary Care Office (PCO) is supported by a federal grant program of the Bureau of Health Workforce in the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and authorized under the Public Health Service Act, as amended, Title 3, Sections 330 and 333. The purpose of the funding is to improve the health of underserved and vulnerable populations by strengthening the health workforce and connecting skilled professionals to communities in need.

The mission of the Hawaii PCO is to improve access to primary care for medically underserved populations.

The Hawaii PCO is one of fifty-three PCOs (one per State, plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands) receiving funding by HRSA and charged with HRSA's goal to improve access to health care.¹

All PCOs are tasked with the following three program expectations:

- **Statewide Primary Care Needs Assessment**
- **Shortage Designation Coordination**
- **Technical Assistance and Collaboration**

In 2018, the Hawaii PCO met **statewide primary care needs assessment** expectations by:

- ❖ Distributing the 2016 Primary Care Needs Assessment Data Book to community health centers, service organizations, children and youth advocates, state legislature, health professional associations, primary care association, and federal and state agencies. The purpose of the data book is to describe Hawaii populations experiencing unmet health needs and it is used to identify barriers to health access and to track prevailing health trends. The Data Book provides over 50 health, population, and socio-economic indicators spanning the life course presented by geographic communities in Hawaii. Chapters highlight maternal and infant health risk, adult morbidity and mortality, oral health and mental health presented in detailed tables and maps. The range of data supports Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC), other community-based organizations, state offices and others by providing census-level data for use in policy development, program planning, and grant applications. The data

¹ U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services. Health Resources and Services Administration Strategic Plan, www.hrsa.gov.

book is online (<https://health.hawaii.gov/fhsd/files/2015/04/DataBook2016.compressed.pdf>). There is also an interactive web application which allows the user to select a specific community and visualize the data across several diverse data sources along with county and state specific estimates and ranks, with capability to add or remove layers to enhance visualization. The web application is on the Health Department's website on the Family Health Services Division webpage at <http://health.hawaii.gov/fhsd/home/publications>. On this webpage, users should scroll down to "Primary Care" and click on the links below "Primary Care Needs Assessment Data Book GIS Maps Links." Each link corresponds to a separate chapter of the Data Book and has its own GIS map for the specified health indicator.

In 2018, the Hawaii PCO met **shortage designation coordination** (the process of designating a geographic area, population, or facility as having a shortage of primary care, oral health, or mental health providers and services) expectations by:

- ❖ Continuing with the validation of the primary care (PC), oral health (OH), and mental health (MH) care professionals practicing in the islands. The National Provider Identifier (NPI) serves as the official registry of health professionals practicing in the islands. The NPI is a HIPAA Administrative Simplification Standard providing a unique identification number for health care providers. The NPI shows there are approximately 2,122 primary care physicians (internal medicine, pediatricians, family practice/general practice, obstetricians/gynecologists), 1,114 general practice dentists, and 331 psychiatrists working in the state. When compared to mainland municipalities of similar size and population, the State of Hawaii demonstrates a lack of qualified health professionals to provide adequate health care to all Hawaii residents.
- ❖ Applying for and obtaining approval for four new Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) designations (a geographic area, population, or facility with a shortage of primary care, oral health, or mental health providers and services); Kula Geographic Primary Care HPSA, Kauai County Geographic Mental Health HPSA, Hawaii County Low Income Population Mental Health HPSA, Hawaii County Low Income Population Oral Health HPSA.

HPSA designations are significant because medical facilities located within the shortage areas are eligible to apply for a variety of federal programs which may allow them to become host sites to health professionals interested in fulfilling their student-to-service obligations. These federal programs include National Health Service Corps (NHSC) and Nurse Corps loan and scholarship programs, the Health Center program, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) Incentive Payment and Rural Health Clinic programs, Medicare Reimbursement for Telehealth Services, and Conrad-30/J-1 Visa Waiver program. This is valuable for facilities in areas that have difficulty retaining health professionals on a long-term basis.

HPSAs are designated by HRSA as having shortages of providers in all disciplines – Primary Care (PC), Oral Health (OH), or Mental Health (MH) providers. There are three types of HPSA designations: 1) geographic (a county or defined service area); 2) population (e.g., low income or Medicaid eligible); or 3) facility (e.g., state corrections site, Department of Health site).

The State of Hawaii has a total of 71 PC, OH, and MH HPSA designations across all the islands. These include Hawaii's FQHC's and their satellite sites, private and public practice facilities and geographic and population service areas.

In 2018, the Hawaii PCO met **technical assistance and collaboration** expectations by seeking to expand access to primary care for underserved populations as follows:

- ❖ Providing technical assistance related to the NHSC, data sharing, HPSA designations, and needs assessments to health care providers, community organizations, private agencies, and state and federal government offices.
- ❖ Assisting 253 practitioners and students interested in the NHSC in Hawaii by providing information about eligible practice sites, HPSA scores, and NHSC policies, procedures, and requirements for recruitment and retention applications. The practitioners included primary care physicians, health psychologists, advanced practice registered nurses, dentists, and medical residents. Eighteen practitioners were placed this year which is significant considering only 766 awards were made nationally in all states and territories.
- ❖ Working with Kaiser Permanente to support their application for Rural Health Clinic status for several of their facilities on Oahu and the neighbor islands. The newly approved Kula Maui HPSA is part of this effort.
- ❖ Partnered with the John A. Burns School of Medicine Area Health Education Center (AHEC) and the Hilo Medical Center Foundation to have Hawaii County become established as a new OH and MH HPSA. This successful collaboration resulted in an approved designation which increases the likelihood of applicants qualifying for federal resources in this community with a rate of 37.4% of the population below 200% of the federal poverty level.
- ❖ A total of 46 NHSC health professionals are serving at 25 sites statewide. The practitioners include two physicians, three pediatricians, one psychiatrist, fifteen general dentists, one pediatric dentist, eight nurse practitioners, eleven clinical psychologists, two licensed clinical social workers, two registered dental hygienists, and one physician assistant.

NHSC health professionals serve on the following islands:

- Hawaii: one pediatrician, one psychiatrist, six dentists, one pediatric dentist, two clinical psychologists, two nurse practitioners, one licensed clinical social worker, and one registered dental hygienist
 - Maui: one physician, one pediatrician, two dentists, and one registered dental hygienist
 - Kauai: one physician assistant
 - Oahu: one physician, one pediatrician, seven dentists, six nurse practitioners, nine clinical psychologists, and one licensed clinical social worker
- ❖ Three new NHSC site applications (a site application is submitted by a health center, clinic, or private provider seeking HRSA designation as an official NHSC site, which would allow

NHSC scholars and clinicians to work at the site in exchange for financial assistance with student loan repayments) were reviewed and approved, including Stephanie Skow, MD, Inc, of Lihue, Kauai; Wahiawa Center for Community Health of Oahu, and the Big Island Substance Abuse Council.

- ❖ Serving as the state contact and liaison for HRSA's Bureau of Health Workforce to disseminate information and updates related to the NHSC, for site and provider applications, and changes in policies and procedures.

The Primary Care Incentive Program makes life better for communities across Hawaii by assuring a skilled health workforce at our community health centers, many of whom go on to become solo health care providers or continue on in health care professions. This program is the central office within Department of Health that is the one-stop shop for all shortage designation, primary care assessment, and technical assistance needs. The community benefits from this program which highlights and disseminates innovative solutions and best practices to help address provider tracking, recruitment, and retention issues, with the aim of improving access to care and reducing disparities. Health care access is greatly improved by increasing the number of health care professionals in our communities for people who are uninsured, isolated, or medically vulnerable.