

# THE HAWAII UNINSURED PROJECT

# MILESTONES

November 2001 / Issue 3

The Hawai'i Uninsured Project is a statewide initiative of the HMSA Foundation that is dedicated to making health care available to all the people of Hawai'i.

#### Address

818 Ke'eaumoku St.  
P.O. Box 860  
Honolulu, HI 96808

#### Web Address

[www.hmsafoundation.org/uninsured](http://www.hmsafoundation.org/uninsured)

#### Steering Committee

Noa Emmett Aluli, MD  
Moloka'i General Hospital

Cliff K. Cisco  
Hawaii Medical  
Service Association

Linda Colburn  
Hawai'i Nature Center

Susan Forbes, DrPH  
Hawai'i Health Information  
Corporation

Beth Giesting  
Hawai'i Primary Care Association

Na'u Kamali'i, JD  
Papa Ola Lokahi

Deane Neubauer, PhD  
University of Hawai'i

Virginia M. Pressler, MD, MBA  
Department of Health

Hardy Spoehr  
Papa Ola Lokahi

#### Project Staff

Andrew H. Aoki, JD, MPP  
HMSA Foundation

Robert A. Fazzi, EdD  
Fazzi Associates, Inc.

Alfred J. Fortin, PhD  
Hawaii Medical  
Service Association

Piilani Pang  
HMSA Foundation  
The Hawai'i Uninsured Project  
Tel: (808) 948-5074  
Fax: (808) 948-6860  
E-mail: [piilani\\_pang@hmsa.com](mailto:piilani_pang@hmsa.com)

## Dept. of Health and The Hawai'i Uninsured Project Team-up for Grant

The Hawai'i Uninsured Project, in partnership with the State Department of Health, has received a grant of \$149,900 from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The grant will support efforts to dramatically reduce the number of uninsured people in Hawai'i.

Now in its second year, The Hawai'i Uninsured Project will use the grant to complete a comprehensive survey of current policy in Hawai'i, review all state and national policy options, collect and analyze existing data on Hawai'i's uninsured, and conduct outreach and community feedback through community meetings. The work will culminate in a policy summit, out of which will come the basis for a master strategy that involves all sectors working toward solutions to the uninsured problem.

"Hawai'i at one time had the lowest number of uninsured people in the country," said Dr. Virginia Pressler, deputy director of the State Department of Health. "That is no longer true. In the last few years, we have seen that number shoot up. Because of this, the Department of Health has joined with public and private partners to create a broad coalition to deal with the crisis. This grant is absolutely crucial to our work. It will not only allow us to conduct a statewide review, but also has the potential to lead to further funding down the line. This problem won't go away overnight, but working together we will find solutions."

#### LEADERSHIP BASE GROWS

The Hawai'i Uninsured Project leadership and staff recognize that the uninsured problem is a complex one and that it will require the involvement of all stakeholders to bring about solutions. Thus the project is expanding its leadership committee to include even more points of view. We welcome the knowledge and experience that our newest leaders will bring to the project:

- Susan Chandler, Ph.D., State Department of Human Services
- Andrew Chang, Hawaiian Electric Industries, Inc.
- Michael Hamnett, Ph.D., Social Science Research Institute
- Irving Lauber, Aloha United Way
- Barbara Luksch, Hawai'i Covering Kids
- Rich Meiers, Healthcare Association of Hawai'i
- David Peters, Ho'ola Lahui Hawai'i
- Kelvin Taketa, Hawai'i Community Foundation
- Murray Towill, Hawai'i Hotel Association
- Sylvia Yuen, Ph.D., University of Hawai'i, Center on the Family

#### A KAILUA WOMAN'S FRUSTRATING SEARCH FOR INSURANCE

Stephany Badenhop was self-employed, athletic and healthy. Several months ago, she and her family moved to Hawai'i with the promise of a new job for her husband, an independent pilot. After the attacks of Sept. 11th, all planes were grounded and the company withdrew its job offer. To complicate matters, Stephany, who had always been the picture of health, found that she needed surgery for a medical problem that has left her in chronic pain.

Stephany can afford to pay a small amount for insurance and believes that it is her responsibility to do so. She began calling around. After much frustrating and exhausting research, Stephany found that she doesn't qualify for QUEST and the cost of individual insurance programs exceed her budget, and won't cover her surgery. With limited income and no health insurance, Stephany can only afford a portion of her much needed surgery.

"I feel like I'm falling through the cracks," said Stephany. "I honestly don't know where to go. I don't want anything for free. I just want to know what to do."

As she contemplates her next move, Stephany asked, "Where do honest, good-intentioned people go? Who do they turn to? It's really difficult knowing you fall in a space that's helpless. Where do I go?"

*If you prefer to receive this newsletter electronically, please e-mail Pi'ilani Pang at [piilani\\_pang@hmsa.com](mailto:piilani_pang@hmsa.com).*