

Mapping the Health Workforce Needs of Hawaii

Severe health disparities exist in rural and Native Hawaiian populations that must be addressed if Hawaii is to truly be the 'Health State'. Our rural counties have more poverty, unemployment, and obesity than the state average. They also have higher rates of diseases, such as, diabetes, hypertension, coronary artery disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, pneumonia, and kidney failure that requires chronic dialysis.

Native Hawaiians have a life expectancy almost five years less than the state average; their rates of breast, cervical, colon and lung cancer are higher than any other ethnic group in the State, and their mortality rates from malignant cancers and strokes are more than three times that of Non-Hawaiians.

In order to improve these health disparities, we must have fully staffed healthcare facilities with culturally competent, well-trained staff accessible to all of our residents. However, there are recognized shortages of many types of health professionals in Hawaii, and no system in place to directly assess our staffing needs or by extension, to meet our projected workforce demand. Current surveys are incomplete, but give a picture of the needs.

Solution:

Last spring these organizations created the Hawaii Health Workforce Collaborative:

1. Hawaii Area Health Education Center
2. John A. Burns School of Medicine
3. Hawaii Primary Care Association
4. Native Hawaiian Health Scholarship Program/Papa Ola Lokahi
5. Center for Nursing
6. Office of Rural Health
7. State Department of Health
8. Hawaii Healthcare Information Corporation
9. Hawaii Health Systems Corporation
10. Family Medicine Residency Program, JABSOM
11. State Health Planning and Development Agency

The following is the plan to address our healthcare workforce needs.

Vision: We envision a healthcare system in Hawaii with a full complement of health care workers distributed to meet the health needs of the entire state.

Mission statement: Improve access to and quality of healthcare in Hawaii by identifying unmet health workforce needs and developing solutions.

Goals and Activities:

1. To perform an ongoing, coordinated, comprehensive assessment of the health workforce needs throughout Hawaii.
 - a. Compile and analyze existing health workforce data
 - b. Survey all healthcare facilities for existing service gaps
 - c. Identify recruitment barriers

2. Facilitate healthcare worker recruitment and placement
 - a. Identify alternative means of filling positions (NP/PA/J1, telemedicine)
 - b. Research successful recruitment models (national and international)
 - c. Develop an integrated health communications and marketing plan
 - Advertising/publications
 - Facilitate communication and networking between healthcare facilities/agencies
 - Encourage provider incentives
 - Specific promotional activities/recruitment efforts
 - Facilitate communication and networking between workforce collaborative and educational systems.
 - Alert health facilities to resources

3. Develop an effective pipeline for local students to pursue health science careers
 - a. Identify barriers to entry into training programs
 - b. Support and expand successful recruitment programs
 - c. Work to expand local training in health careers
 - d. Work to increase federal funding for local healthcare worker training (GME, etc.)

4. Expand retention efforts across Hawaii
 - a. Research existing barriers to retention in Hawaii
 - b. Explore possible incentives and other retention methods

5. Project future health workforce needs and develop a plan for meeting those needs.
 - a. Develop a baseline workforce assessment
 - b. Project workforce demand based on population growth and other factors that influence need
 - c. Facilitate communication and networking between workforce collaborative and educational systems.

The following expands section 5:

In order to facilitate recruitment and retention of healthcare workers, the Hawaii Health Workforce Collaborative will develop a comprehensive database that can utilize existing data to map the health workforce infrastructure statewide and make projections for future needs. We will create a secure SQL database with

fields for demographic and educational information on licensed providers and selected non-licensed staff, such as information technology employees.

All available datasets on locations of providers in Hawaii will be collected. These will include DCCA data, professional association data, national provider databases, large health group employment data and all other data as appropriate.

A standard form will be developed to include in all Hawaii State licensing applications for regular updating of the database of supply data. This will include practice locations, specialty, hours spent in locations, and case mix.

GIS mapping software will be applied to the data collected to determine the distribution of our healthcare workforce.

Demand models will be utilized to project future health workforce needs.

Provide a regularly updated repository of information on all vacant positions and post advertisements for positions on the Internet.

References

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