

REPORT TO THE THIRTY- SECOND LEGISLATURE

STATE OF HAWAI'I

2023

**PURSUANT TO SECTION 321-63
HAWAI'I REVISED STATUTES**

**REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
TO SUBMIT AN ANNUAL REPORT ON DENTAL HEALTH ACTIVITIES,
EXPENDITURES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**



PREPARED BY:

**STATE OF HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

December 2022

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES DIVISION HOSPITAL & COMMUNITY DENTAL SERVICES BRANCH

Executive Summary:

The Hospital & Community Dental Services Branch (HCDSB) is the only dental state-operated public health program in Hawai'i that provides direct dental treatment services. The HCDSB provides dental treatment services primarily for individuals with disabilities and other special needs who lack or have limited access to private sector services. The HCDSB is organizationally placed in the Developmental Disabilities Division (DDD).

As required by HRS §321-63(5), the Department of Health Annual Report on dental activities, plans, measures, and expenditures is submitted to the Legislature.

Program Objective:

The HCDSB provides comprehensive community safety-net dental care services to vulnerable and underserved populations in Hawai'i that have limited or no access to dental treatment, including patients that are aged, blind, and disabled. These populations include persons with severe chronic mental illness, frail elderly persons who are medically fragile, and individuals with significant intellectual and developmental disabilities, who would otherwise not receive dental treatment through private dental providers or community health centers.

Program Activities:

Direct Dental Services

Dental services are provided by the HCDSB personnel to patients who reside at Hawai'i State institutions, including Hawai'i State Hospital, Leahi Hospital, and Kalaupapa Settlement, as well as to patients who reside in the community. The HCDSB has five (5) dental clinics located at the Department's Health Centers on O'ahu: Diamond Head, Lanakila, Leeward, Windward, and the Hawai'i State Hospital. Currently, there are no dental clinics located on the Neighbor Islands.

During fiscal year 2022, the HCDSB provided clinical services for 1,019 individuals. The HCDSB dental clinics completed a total of 8,077 dental procedures in the past year. Patients seen by the HCDSB clinics included:

36%	Persons with a mental health disability
50%	Persons with an Intellectual/Developmental Disability (I/DD)
20%	Persons aged 65 years and older
11%	Hawai'i State Hospital patients

COVID-19 Pandemic

The dental clinics continued to operate and provide comprehensive dental treatment for patients without interruption in services throughout the year. There were no State or County issued emergency proclamations/orders that instructed providers to limit or restrict elective dental services.

In response to the prolonged COVID-19 pandemic, the HCDSB implemented and continued to review/revise the following mitigation activities. These activities were implemented to address the health and safety of patients/staff/visitors.

- Dental Infection Control Policies and Procedures addressing the health and safety of patients/staff related to COVID-19.
- Dental site evaluations for clinic reconfigurations and modifications to mitigate against the transmission of COVID-19.
- Utilization of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for staff to safely treat patients and ensure clinics are operational. This includes securing N95 respirators or equivalent respirators for dental staff to use when providing aerosol-generating dental procedures.
- Utilization of supplemental infection control equipment to clean and disinfect the dental clinics to mitigate COVID-19 exposures. Example: Foggers and hypochlorous acid systems.

The described activities are continuously reviewed and revised to comply with the recommended guidelines by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Dental Association as the pandemic continued into this fiscal year. Infection control mitigation activities are revised and implemented based on the state's COVID-19 safety levels.

Community Collaboration

Legislation

In the 2022 Legislative Session, Medicaid adult dental benefits were reestablished to cover comprehensive dental treatment for participants. The HCDSB proactively worked with the Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition (HOHC) to advocate, educate, and obtain support to expand the Hawai'i Medicaid adult dental coverage benefits beyond emergency dental treatment. The DOH collaborated with HOHC to analyze and publish the benefits and feasibility of expanding Medicaid adult dental coverage in the state to support the argument to expand dental benefits. This expanded adult dental benefit will provide the necessary dental coverage for adults to not only address their oral health needs but will improve their overall health.

The HCDSB and HOHC also collaborated to advocate and facilitate the introduction of Senate Bill 2280, which allows dental assistants to provide limited, but essential dental auxiliary support for dental hygienists under the general supervision of a dentist in a

public health setting. This bill passed into law (Act 67, LS 2022) July 2022. This law will contribute to the development and sustainability of community-based oral health programs in our state, such as the virtual dental home (teledentistry) and school-based dental sealant programs. These programs help to reduce barriers and increase access to dental services for the most vulnerable and underserved populations by providing services in the communities where people live, learn, and socialize.

Community Activities

The HCDSB collaborated and worked with other state, non-profit, and educational institutions to improve access to dental care and address the oral health disparities in Hawai'i. There was a coordination of programs designed to enhance the community dental infrastructure for access to dental treatment such as the virtual dental home, dental sealant programs, and improving oral health education via outreach programs.

The HCDSB collaborated with various programs including but not limited to:

- Queen's Medical Center, Dental Clinic and General Practice Dental Residency Program
- University of Hawai'i, School of Nursing & Dental Hygiene at Mānoa
- Kapi'olani Community College, Dental Assisting Program
- California Northstate University, School of Dentistry
- Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition
- Hawaii Dental Association
- Hawaii Dental Service Foundation
- Dental Lifeline Network
- Women, Infants, and Children Programs
- Early Head Start and Head Start Programs

During 2022, the HCDSB community oral health activities were deferred or minimized as programs redirected resources to address the COVID-19 pandemic. Community collaborations and outreach will be increased in 2023 as the state and community opens up to in-person activities and trainings.

Teledentistry (Virtual Dental Home) Pilot Project

Based on the progress and success of the Hawai'i Virtual Dental Home (VDH) Pilot Projects on the islands of Hawai'i (Hawai'i Island Community Health Center) and Maui (Hui No Ke Ola Pono Community Health Center), a one-year grant was awarded by the Hawaii Dental Services Foundation for the expansion of this pilot project to the island of Kaua'i. The Kaua'i VDH Pilot Project partnerships include Hoku Smiles (private pedodontics dental practice), Child Family Service, Na Lei Wili (AHEC), and the DOH Kaua'i District Health Office. This project is unique that it involves a private dental practice in place of a Federally Qualified Health Center or Community Health Center Dental Clinic.

The Kaua'i VDH pilot project will provide dental care and education for children aged zero (0) to five (5) years old at community sites such as Head Start and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) programs throughout the island of Kaua'i. In September 2022, dental services started in the Head Start programs. This pilot project will evaluate the sustainability and feasibility of a private dental practice implementing a VDH program in Hawai'i.

Oral Health Trainings

In 2014, the HCDSB developed a training presentation addressing oral health awareness and oral hygiene practices for care providers and families of persons with I/DD and the elderly. The HCDSB has identified the need for oral health training for families, caregivers, and oral health professionals who provide care and treat persons with I/DD and the elderly. The current presentation entails didactic and hands-on training (in-person) elements and was updated this year to incorporate the most recent oral health research/evidence-based practices. This training presentation is conducted annually and offered to the community as an oral health resource and outreach.

In 2022, the HCDSB utilized in-person and virtual meeting/presentation platforms to conduct and continue oral health trainings. This year's presentations were completed with the following organizations:

- University of Hawai'i, Mānoa
 - School of Nursing & Dental Hygiene
 - John A. Burns, School of Medicine
 - Speech Language Pathologists
 - Interprofessional Education Seminar Panel
- Kapi'olani Community College, Dental Assisting Program
- Nursing Homes (Collaboration with Hawaii Dental Foundation through Kupuna Smiles Program)
 - Ann Pearl
 - St. Francis Villas
 - Pu'uwai 'O Makaha
 - O'ahu Care Facility

Problems and Issues Encountered by the Program:

Oral health disparities continue to be a significant health issue for our Hawai'i residents. Medicaid recipients and other low-income residents and medically compromised individuals have limited access to dental care from private sector dental care providers and even community dental clinics. Patients are referred to the HCDSB by other state public health and social service agencies and private sector health care providers for dental treatment. Presently, the HCDSB does not operate dental clinics on the Neighbor Islands where access to essential emergency dental care (to relieve pain and infection) is limited. The capacity of the state's system of community health center dental clinics is

limited and individuals with I/DD have limited access to care at these community health centers.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a significant impact on clinic operations and dental care for patients this fiscal year. Although the clinics provided comprehensive dental services throughout this year, we are still addressing our patient schedule backlog by prioritizing patients who are high risk or need urgent dental care. This is a result of a reduction of the clinics' daily patient schedules to accommodate the COVID-19 dental infection control protocols implemented and the increase in cancellations/no-shows by patients due to COVID-19 concerns.

The HCDSB continues to encounter challenges filling its vacancies due to the staffing shortage of oral health auxiliary workers. In Hawai'i, there is a dental assistant shortage, and the marketplace is competitive. This staffing shortage has directly impacted the clinics by reducing our operational capacity to treat patients. The HCDSB has been using its community and personal contacts to attract and encourage dental assistants to apply for the vacant positions.

Program Recommendations:

The HCDSB will continue to provide dental treatment and collaborate with private sector providers, community health centers, and other oral health stakeholders by making them aware of the problems faced by the uninsured and underinsured population in accessing dental treatment services. The HCDSB will also further evaluate the various oral health care models implemented by other states to address access of care challenges in Hawai'i. We will continue to advocate support for those who need but do not have access to dental care.

Total HCDSB Budgeted for FY2022:

Position Count: 11.00 FTE*
Personnel Services: \$ 952,225
Contract: \$200,000, The Queen's Medical Center Dental Residency Program
Other Current Expenses: \$112,075
Total \$1,264,300

FAMILY HEALTH SERVICES DIVISION

Since the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Oral Health Disease Prevention five-year grant ended on August 31, 2018, key programs activities ended.

Ongoing Oral Health Assurance Activities of Other FHSD Programs:

- Contract with 16 health service programs (including the Federally Qualified Health Centers) to provide primary care services for the uninsured and underinsured that includes dental treatment services (Office of Primary Care and Rural Health)

- Monitor workforce shortages (including dental services) and establish federal designations for health professional shortage areas (Office of Primary Care and Rural Health)

- Completed the Hawai'i State Department of Health, Oral Health Data Tracker in partnership with the Hawai'i Health Data Warehouse.
(<https://www.hawaiihealthmatters.org/indicators/index/dashboard?alias=OralHealth>)

This convenient online tool allows users to review data across 30 oral health indicators for children, pregnant women (PRAMS), and adults.

Position Count: 0 FTE

Total: \$0.00

Means of Funding: N/A