



Na Leo Ola

Newsletter of the Hawai'i Medical Association

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OLA PONO IKE

Reserve Your Table Today!

Saturday, September 26, 2026
Hilton Hawaiian Village
Coral Ballroom I - III, 5:00 p.m.

Come and join us for the 27th annual Ola Pono Ike Gala!

It's an opportunity to celebrate the tireless work of our physician community, while gathering with colleagues from across our island home.

The Hawai'i Medical Association hosts the Ola Pono Ike Gala Dinner to bestow our highest honors of the year. We recognize HMA member physicians who have contributed greatly to our profession, and every other year, we recognize a community member who has given selflessly of themselves. This year, we're proud to honor:

Kore Kai Liow, MD
Physician of the Year

Benjamin Young, MD
Lifetime Achievement

Shelley Wilson
Manawale'a Community Service Award

Part of the proceeds from Ola Pono Ike are also gifted to worthy medical nonprofits who assist the most vulnerable populations. This year's recipients are:

NAMI Hawaii
Ohana Medical Mission
JABSOM HOME Project

Ola Pono Ike is an evening of fun and fellowship, with opportunities to renew old friendships while striking up new ones. Some of our members see Ola Pono Ike as the gathering spot to reconnect with colleagues on an annual basis; others use Ola Pono Ike to thank their hard-working staff for their dedication to their patients.

Registration is now open! Make your reservations at hawaiiomedicalassociation.org today!

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THESE PROMOTIONS

Special Pricing for HMA Members

Members can purchase Pohaku Ku'i Ai Tables at the discounted price of \$1,800. That's a savings of \$1,000! Reservations must be made by July 29, 2026.

Free Exhibitor Table Promotion

If you purchase a full price Pohaku Ku'i Ai or Umeke table in the month of June, you'll receive an exhibitor display table at no extra cost!

Conversations AT HMA

Watch the Latest Episodes on the HMA YouTube Channel

Our latest episodes of Conversations at HMA garnered much attention from both our HMA membership and the general public. The Conversation with leaders from HMSA - CEO **Mark Mugiishi, MD**, and President and COO **Jenny Smith** - was of particular interest in the wake of continued talks of an HMSA / HPH affiliation. And our Conversation with **Michael Robinson** of Hawai'i Pacific Health and **Jacce Mikulanec** of the Queen's Health Systems helped to unpack a lot of important information from the 2026 Hawai'i legislative session.



L-R: Mark Mugiishi, MD; Jenny Smith; Nadine Tenn Salle, MD



L-R: Elizabeth A. Ignacio, MD; Michael Robinson; Jacce Mikulanec

If you weren't able to join us for the livestreams, you can watch these and all episodes of Conversations at HMA on the HMA YouTube channel.

We'll also be converting all episodes to HMAConnect podcasts, so you can listen to them at your leisure.

President's Message *by Nadine Tenn Salle, MD*



Hawai'i's healthcare community is entering a period of significant transition. While much public attention has

focused on the proposed HMSA—Hawai'i Pacific Health “One Health” affiliation, an equally important issue is unfolding: the planned transition of many primary care physicians from HMSA's value-based payment model back to fee-for-service beginning July 1, 2026.

For many practices, this represents more than a payment change. Over the last decade, physicians redesigned staffing models, workflows, quality reporting systems, care coordination infrastructure, and patient access strategies around HMSA's population health framework. Abrupt operational shifts create uncertainty, particularly for small and independent practices already facing workforce shortages, rising overhead costs, and administrative burden.

Physicians throughout Hawai'i are requesting additional clarity regarding the transition. Questions remain regarding fee schedules, including MAC (maximum allowable charge) rates, the future of physician organization administrative fees, reimbursement for telehealth, non-face-to-face patient care such as MyChart communications, and ongoing support for patient care coordination activities that have become integral to modern primary care delivery.

Importantly, many physicians are also asking whether patients and

employers fully understand that this transition is occurring and what its downstream impact may be on access, staffing, and practice sustainability across the islands.

The Hawai'i Medical Association is encouraging a thoughtful transition plan that recognizes the operational realities facing practices, particularly those serving vulnerable populations, rural communities, and neighbor islands. Hawai'i cannot afford further destabilization of primary care access at a time when physician shortages remain a critical statewide issue.

More broadly, these developments underscore the need for Hawai'i to establish a longterm healthcare strategy that reflects our state's unique geographic, workforce, and community realities. Payment reform, healthcare consolidation, access, affordability, and workforce sustainability cannot be addressed in isolation.

The 2026 Hawai'i legislative session has now concluded. HMA remained actively engaged throughout the session on issues impacting patient safety, workforce sustainability, behavioral health access, and healthcare delivery statewide, including advocacy regarding SB 847 and patient safety safeguards. Comments on SB 847 can be submitted through the following link: governor.hawaii.gov/comments-onlegislation/.

We encourage physicians and community members to watch the HMA Public Policy Committee Year-End Update on the HMA YouTube Channel.

Executive Director's Message by Marc Alexander



The 2026 Hawai'i State Legislature closed on May 8, 2026. While our final report for the session will be published later in June, a preliminary summary has already been posted on our public advocacy page online (visit hawaiimedicalassociation.org). HMA has also hosted several Conversations at HMA discussing the session, including our most recent one, "2026 Legislative Wrap Up" (on May 26th). This last one featured leaders from HMA and two of our major hospital systems: **Mr. Michael Robinson**, Vice President of Government Relations & Community Affairs for Hawai'i Pacific Health (HPH), **Mr. Jace Mikulanec**, Director of Government Relations for the Queen's Health Systems, and **Dr. Elizabeth A. Ignacio**, HMA Public Policy Chair and Immediate Past President, and an interventional radiologist. The recording of the event is available on our YouTube channel.

It's been a busy month as just last week, HMA hosted a Conversations at HMA entitled, "A Conversation with HMSA Leadership: Shaping Hawai'i's Healthcare Future." Co-sponsored with the Hawai'i Medical Foundation, our guests were **Dr. Mark Mugiishi**, CEO of HMSA and a surgeon; **Ms. Jenny Smith**, HMSA's first woman President and COO, with moderator, **Dr. Nadine Tenn Salle**, HMA President and a practicing internal medicine and pediatrics physician. The recording is available on the HMA YouTube channel. While the target audience for these programs is first physicians, patients and anyone interested in Hawai'i's healthcare landscape will find these offerings useful.

These kinds of events underscore **the importance of collaboration, and respectful, even if at times difficult, discussion of complex healthcare issues.**

Just prior to publication, one of our physician leaders brought to our attention a recently released national report, *Moral Injury in Medicine: The Human Costs of Practicing in a Profit-Driven System* (Physicians for a National Health Program, March 2026). The report explores the concept of "moral injury" among physicians—describing the distress that can arise when clinicians feel unable to provide the care they believe is most appropriate due to broader system constraints—and offers one perspective on how structural factors within the U.S. healthcare environment may contribute to this experience.

Drawing on surveys, interviews, and focus groups involving more than 1,200 physicians, the report suggests that administrative and operational requirements—such as prior authorizations, coverage limitations, productivity expectations, and documentation demands—can, at times, create challenges for physicians seeking to deliver timely, evidence-based care. Many physicians reported experiencing varying levels of professional distress, and some indicated that these pressures had influenced career decisions. The report also notes potential implications for patient care, including delays, access challenges, and the possibility of widening disparities in already vulnerable populations.

The report emphasizes that these concerns may be rooted in broader systemic dynamics and suggest

that addressing them could require consideration of policy, organizational, and practice-level approaches. Their recommendations include exploring ways to better support clinical judgment, streamline administrative processes, and examine the role of various stakeholders in shaping care delivery.

In referencing this report, it is important to acknowledge that reasonable perspectives may differ regarding both its framing and conclusions. Hawai'i is fortunate to have a healthcare community grounded in **mutual respect and a shared commitment to the well-being of our residents.** Even when viewpoints differ, **we continue to value thoughtful dialogue and collaboration.** Recent Conversations at HMA reflect this spirit of engagement and openness.

HMA looks forward to fostering a constructive, locally informed discussion around the issue of moral injury—beginning with listening to and learning from our physicians here in Hawai'i.

HMA in Action



Mark Conching and Marc Alexander attend the Philippine Medical Association of Hawai'i's Memorial Weekend Conference to promote HMA membership and advocacy.