



Na Leo Ola

Newsletter of the Hawai'i Medical Association

Volume 6, Issue 4

April 2026

Conversations AT HMA

A Conversation with HMSA Leadership: Shaping Hawai'i's Healthcare Future



Join us for our next episode of Conversations at HMA, where we welcome special guests from HMSA, CEO **Mark Mugiishi, MD**, and President and COO **Jenny Smith**. They will share their thoughts on the future of healthcare in Hawai'i, and HMSA's role in shaping it.

A Conversation with HMSA Leadership: Shaping Hawai'i's Healthcare Future

Wednesday, May 20, 2026

5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Virtual via Zoom

The conversation will be moderated by HMA President **Nadine Tenn Salle, MD**.

Make sure to join us for this very important conversation. You can register for Conversations at HMA by visiting hawaiiomedicalassociation.org.

OLA PONO IKE

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

Registration is Now Open!

Registration is now open 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

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

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.

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



As discussions continue regarding the proposed Hawai'i Pacific Health-HMSA affiliation, the Hawai'i Medical

Association remains focused on what matters most: ensuring that Hawai'i's healthcare system is physician-led and grounded in patient-centered care. HMA has not taken a formal position on the affiliation. Our role is to ensure that these conversations are anchored in principles that prioritize patients, support physicians, and strengthen care delivery across all islands.

For Hawai'i, physician leadership is essential. Our geography and workforce realities demand models of care that emphasize clinical judgment, continuity, and

accountability. This is particularly true for neighbor island communities and private practitioners, where disparities in access to specialty care, workforce shortages, and resource limitations are felt most acutely. Any future system - including potential affiliations - must address these gaps directly.

As part of this broader discussion, Hawai'i must advance models of care that thoughtfully balance when patients should be triaged to O'ahu for higher levels of care and when communities can and should be resourced to care for patients locally. This requires intentional investment in workforce, infrastructure, and telehealth-enabled coordination, ensuring that care is delivered in the right place, at the right time, for each patient. Without this balance, disparities across islands will persist or worsen.

HMA also seeks to reframe the broader healthcare conversation. While national and local discussions often focus on dysfunction - cost, access, administrative burden, and workforce strain - Hawai'i has an opportunity to focus on solutions. The question is not only what is broken, but what we must build: a system that improves access, supports physician practice across settings, and delivers equitable, high-quality care for all communities. HMA will be hosting a healthcare roundtable this summer.

HMA remains committed to supporting physicians and advancing a healthcare system that is patient-centered, physician-led, and accountable to the people of Hawai'i.

Legislative Update *by Elizabeth Ann Ignacio, MD and Marc Alexander*

As of April 28, the Hawai'i Legislature remains in the conference committee phase, where House and Senate negotiators are working to resolve remaining differences before the Final Decking deadline on April 29 for non-fiscal bills. Several measures remain active and are moving forward through conference hearings in the coming days.

Key bills with ongoing conference committee activity, include, **HB1970** (tumor registry), **SB2969** (Maui Wildfire Exposure Study and health registry), **SB847** (Kaua'i psychologist prescriptive authority pilot), and **HB1546**, which would establish a health coverage continuity pilot. Other measures such as **HB1574** (HELP

service requirement adjustments), **HB1591** (expansion of the physician preceptor tax credit), **SB2816** (expansion of enterprise zones to include healthcare services), and **HB1898** (alignment of vaccine guidelines), have all had conferees appointed, signaling continued negotiations in process. A bill like **SB3133** (DOH, prevailing medical standard) has only received notices of disagreement, signaling it is unlikely to move forward.

Several HMA-supported bills have already passed the Legislature and been transmitted to the Governor, including **HB1573** regulating FDA-approved vaping products, **HB1858** modernizing fetal death

registration and certification procedures, and **HB1875** protecting providers delivering gender-affirming and reproductive care from legal and insurance retaliation. In addition, **GM745** confirming the reappointment of **Dr. Elizabeth Ignacio** to the Hawai'i Medical Board was approved unanimously by the Senate, marking a completed legislative action.

Together, these measures reflect substantial progress on HMA priorities, with final outcomes for conference bills expected imminently.



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