Hawaii Island Community Health Center: Building A Stronger, Healthier Hawaiʻi Island

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We’re stronger together. How many times have we all heard these words over the past three years? If you’re like me, it’s likely that you’ve heard them so often that they begin to lose a little bit of their power.

 I say this phrase often to myself, and its meaning remains strong for me because I see the absolute reality of this nearly every day. As the Director of Health Equity at Hawaiʻi Island Community Health Center (HICHC), I’m privileged to have trusting relationships with many diverse members of our community. It’s not a cliché, we really are all stronger together.

At Hawaii Island Community Health Center our goal is to increase access to-health care, medical, and behavioral health services island wide; particularly for those who experience barriers that limit their access. To accomplish this and reach our entire island, my team of Patient Navigators, Community Health Workers (CHW) and Educators have dedicated their time to build strong ties with community members and develop various, innovative programs. Our teams are in the schools at our in-school health center sites, visiting farm workers in the fields, outreaching to churches and housing facilities, speaking with unhoused folks at encampments, and visiting isolated rural communities.

If you are asking, “how does that impact me?” as you read this, the answer may be simpler than you think. When our unhoused neighbors gain access to wound care through our street medicine outreach, injuries are treated in a timely manner and the risk of transmissible infections at community beaches and showers is reduced. Here we are stronger in caring for one another.

Likewise, when a child in your own keiki’s 4th grade class gains access to behavioral health services through our in-school School Based Health Center, it’s not only that child and their ‘ohana who benefit. By meeting one child’s needs and giving them and their family tools for engaging in class, the learning environment blooms for all the students. When farm workers, hotel staff, or members of a rural church congregation receive medical checks on-site at their workplaces or places of worship – preventative care helps to reduce major illnesses, links patients to early interventions, and reduces emergency room visits and severe illness that might otherwise add to the strain on our already limited medical resources.

Are you a business owner whose staff would benefit from wellness checks or free tobacco cessation support? Do you work with a population who struggle to access medical, dental, or behavioral health care? Our Community Health Centers are here to help, whether that’s in sharing information or helping to reduce barriers that prevent someone from accessing the care they need. To learn more about our organization and ways to engage with our team please visit us at [www.HICommunityHealthCenter.org](https://url.emailprotection.link/?bG3pFmdgrXR59bc12tXDIaGut_9DsDefaOH_SYFamr52aR9DMl3FK2MzRBEUftKuSRTDM8hnt-vKiR8rCSA-vQNNeI9zSFoQbYFR2VHkZvjttuyU01o2iB4f3CX4nWCaK).

With your help we can all get stronger together.

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