



**WAI'ANAE COAST
COMPREHENSIVE
HEALTH CENTER**
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Press Release

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Wai'anae Coast Comprehensive Health Center to Recruit, Train, and Retain Entry-Level Workers with Support of Major Grant

Local Health Center Will Expand Training and Job Opportunities

Wai'anae, HI – The Wai'anae Coast Comprehensive Health Center (WCCHC), a network of primary health care centers with locations in Wai'anae, Nanakuli, Waipahu, and Kapolei, was awarded a \$199,995 grant as part of a major national initiative to recruit, train, and retain the entry-level employees required by community health centers to deliver high-quality health care. The grant was announced today by the center and the RCHN Community Health Foundation (RCHN CHF), the only national foundation dedicated solely to supporting community health centers. The foundation's Health Center Entry-Level Workforce Recruitment and Retention Initiative is designed to help the nation's 1,200 community health centers prepare for substantial growth in the next few years. Under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, health centers will play an expanded role in delivering care, and more than thirty million additional Americans, many of whom are expected to seek services at community health centers, will obtain health insurance coverage.

With the foundation's support, the Wai'anae Coast Comprehensive Health Center will train entry-level staff so that they are able to work both within and across multiple departments. In addition to offering its current employees opportunities for career development, the WCCHC will create internships for community college students who wish to embark on careers in health care and will increase opportunities, through existing educational programs and expanded outreach efforts, for U.S. veterans to obtain the skills they need to become successful health center employees.

“Caring for patients is growing more challenging in Wai'anae. At the same time that we are seeing more patients with increasingly complex health problems, members of our staff are working more frequently with new technologies, including electronic health records and practice management systems, and dealing with the complexities of major changes in insurance coverage,” said Richard Bettini, President and CEO of the center. “We are committed to training our staff to excel in this complex and changing environment and deliver high-quality care to residents of Wai'anae and surrounding communities.”

In addition to its grant to the Wai'anae Coast Comprehensive Health Center, the New York-based RCHN CHF made grants to community health centers located in four other states: Maine, Mississippi, New York, and Washington. Working with local partners, including vocational programs, community colleges, and veterans' groups, each of the centers will develop, implement, and test community-level approaches for ensuring that health centers have enough highly qualified entry-level staff to meet increasing demand. The foundation and the participating health centers will share their findings with health centers across the country, most of which face similar challenges in recruiting and retaining entry-level workers. These staff members, including patient service representatives and medical assistants, work with clinical teams to deliver high-quality, coordinated care focused on the needs of patients, creating comprehensive “medical homes.” Key challenges for community health centers include training entry-level workers to use new electronic management and health record systems, implement new work flows, and appropriately code and bill for services while serving more patients, including an increasing number with complex health problems.

“We believe that the Wai‘anae Coast Comprehensive Health Center will lead the way for other health centers across the country by developing and testing programs to attract and retain a strong workforce,” said Julio Bellber, President and CEO of the RCHN CHF. “This center, which cares for thousands of patients, also plays a crucial role in providing good jobs for entry-level workers, creating economic growth in Wai‘anae and other communities.”

“Community health centers are ready to build on their very strong foundations to expand the delivery of comprehensive, high-quality, community-based health care as the new health care law goes into effect,” said Thomas Van Coverden, president and CEO of the National Association of Community Health Centers. “We welcome this initiative and look forward to learning from these local efforts and sharing effective strategies with our health center colleagues from coast to coast.”

About the Wai‘anae Coast Comprehensive Health Center

The Wai‘anae Coast Comprehensive Health Center serves the medically underserved community of Wai‘anae and surrounding communities in the Leeward and Central regions of the island of Oahu. Serving the community since 1972 when it started as a one-doctor office, the WCCHC is the largest, and oldest, of the fourteen community health centers in the state of Hawaii.

In 2010, the center served 28,912 patients, the majority being Native Hawaiian (52%), followed by Asian and other Pacific Islanders (27%), and Caucasians (16%). Data shows that 67% of patients are at 100% of the federal poverty level or below, 13% are uninsured, and 55% are receiving coverage under QUEST, the state Medicaid program.

The Wai‘anae Coast Comprehensive Health Center is a learning center that offers health career training to ensure a better future for the community, and it is a major economic provider in the community, employing 455 individuals, the majority of whom reside on the Wai‘anae Coast. The health center is also an innovator, using leading-edge technology to deliver the highest quality of health care services.

The WCCHC achieves its mission by not only serving patients who seek services, but also by incorporating the goal of improving the overall health status of the community it serves. The vision of the founders of the health center -- to offer

comprehensive health services -- has guided the development of services and activities provided today, which include:

Adult Day Care, Case Management, Chronic Disease Management, Emergency Room Services (24 hours, 365 days/year), Exercise and Fitness Training & Walking Trails, Family Planning, Health Education, Health Career Training, Health Emergency Liaison Program, Homeless Outreach, Integrated Healing (Weight Management, Pain Management, etc.), Laboratory, Mental Health Treatment, Native Hawaiian Healing (Lomilomi, Ho'oponopono, La'au Lapa'au, Pale Keiki, and Ha Ha), Nutrition Counseling, Patient Services, Pharmacy, Primary Care Clinics (Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Women's Health), Radiology, Mammography, Bone Density Screening, Specialists (General Surgery, Ophthalmology, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Orthopedics, Perinatology, Podiatry, Psychiatry, Psychology, Dermatology, and Chronic Pain Management), Substance Abuse Treatment, Women, Infant, and Children Program (WIC).

About the RCHN Community Health Foundation

The RCHN Community Health Foundation, founded in October 2005, is a not-for-profit operating foundation whose mission is to support community health centers through strategic investment, outreach, education, and cutting-edge health policy research. The only foundation in the country dedicated solely to community health centers, RCHN CHF builds on health centers' forty-year commitment to the provision of accessible, high-quality, community-based health care services for underserved and medically vulnerable populations. For more information on RCHN CHF, visit www.rchnfoundation.org.