

## OAHU REGION 2021 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

### OAHU REGION

The Hawaii Health Systems Corporation (“HHSC”) Oahu Region provides essential services to our community’s most vulnerable populations through its operation of two long-term care facilities, **Maluhia** and **Leahi Hospital**, located respectively in lower Alewa Heights and Kaimuki. Maluhia and Leahi provide in-patient skilled nursing and intermediate care services to the elderly, disabled and otherwise incapacitated population – most of whom are covered under Medicare and Medicaid programs. Maluhia and Leahi also provide access to much needed Adult Day Health Centers (two of only four remaining on Oahu) and both facilities partner with Hawaii Meals on Wheels to provide nearly 320 hot meals per week for disabled elders on Oahu, which enables them to sustain their independence at home and in the community. Additionally, Maluhia provides Medical services through its Geriatric Outpatient Physician’s Clinic. For many of our clinic patients, nursing home residents and day health participants – especially those receiving Medicaid benefits due to a lack of personal assets (approximately 80% of our inpatients), the Oahu Region’s facilities are often the only options for quality post-acute and community-based health care services.

### Leahi Hospital

Leahi Hospital, located in the heart of Kaimuki in Honolulu, Hawaii, was first established in 1901. Leahi Hospital is licensed for 159 beds: 155 nursing home beds (dual certified for Skilled Nursing and Intermediate Care) and 4 acute beds in Leahi’s tuberculosis (“TB”) unit, the only unit of its kind on the island of Oahu. Individuals requiring long-term care, short-term restorative care or TB treatment are admitted to our nursing facility/acute beds. Care is provided by an interdisciplinary team of experienced healthcare professionals. Currently, Leahi Hospital employs approximately 200 people.

#### Long-Term Care Inpatient Services:

- Operating 122 Dual Certified Skilled Nursing and Intermediate Care Beds

#### Support:

- Recreational Therapy
- Dietary Services
- Social Services
- Speech Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- 4 Acute TB Inpatient Beds - Outpatient Services (TB patients are discharged to the Lanakila TB Clinic for follow-up).

#### Outpatient Services:

- Adult Day Health Center (temporarily closed due to pandemic on March 23, 2020 through June 30, 2021)
- Collaboration with Meals on Wheels to provide 42 meals per week (Monday through Friday) to residents in the Kaimuki / Kapahulu area.

Patient Census and Other Services:

	<u>Long Term Care</u>	<u>TB</u>
Patient Days	34,693	13

Adult Day Health: (Temporarily Closed)

Participant Days	0
Baths Provided	0

Meals on Wheels:

Meals Provided	2,198
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Volunteer Services:

Number of Active Volunteers:	1
Number of Total Volunteer Hours:	215
Volunteer Auxiliary Contributions:	\$9,000

**Maluhia**

Maluhia, located in lower Alewa Heights in Honolulu, Hawaii, is licensed to operate 158 skilled nursing and intermediate care facility beds and employs approximately 165 employees. Maluhia was established in 1923, and continues to evolve in order to meet the changing needs of the community. Maluhia provides the following services:

Long-Term Care Inpatient Services:

- Operating 120 Dual Certified Skilled Nursing and Intermediate Care Beds

Support:

- Recreational Therapy
- Dietary Services
- Social Services
- Speech Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy

Outpatient Services:

- Primary Care Geriatric Outpatient Physician Clinic
- Adult Day Health Center (Temporarily closed)
- Collaboration with Meals on Wheels to provide nearly 130 meals per week (Monday through Friday) to residents in Kalihi/Liliha areas

## **Patient Census and Other Services**

### Long Term Care:

Patient Days 31,511

### Adult Day Health:

Participant Days 0

Baths Provided 0

### Outpatient Clinic:

Clinic Visits 1,025

### Meals on Wheels:

Meals Provided 7,128

### Volunteer Services:

Number of Active Volunteers: 16

Number of Total Volunteer Hours: 500

Volunteer Auxiliary Contributions: approx. \$5,790

## **COVID-19**

For nearly two (2) years, the impact of the COVID-19 virus on society, the economy and businesses has been significant and, as it does for many others, COVID-19 continues to pose difficult challenges for our facilities. Through extensive outreach and pro-vaccination campaigns, we have managed to reach a collective vaccination rate of roughly 98% for residents and staff. Additionally, more than 80% of the residents and staff have received a booster. The many issues brought by this pandemic primarily center around residents' and employees' safety and health, the financial impact and stability of the facilities, and a multitude of operational difficulties such as staffing, closure of the adult day health programs and supply shortages.

Successful efforts in obtaining personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gowns, eye protection/face shields, gloves, medical masks and respirators required the exercise of many unconventional and exceptional strategies given their exorbitant costs and unavailability through normal sources. A particularly difficult challenge that the facilities are facing is obtaining affordable and reliable COVID-19 test kits. These kits have proven to be very expensive to procure and have not been readily available. Nonetheless, they are vital in our pro-active efforts to keep COVID-19 out of our facilities.

Thus far, although a number of staff had contracted the COVID-19 virus, no Leahi or Maluhia residents have been infected. We attribute this success primarily to the infection control protocols implemented by our clinical leadership with a particular emphasis on strict hygiene and the use of proper PPE. Additionally, staff training and monitoring on infection prevention procedures are conducted regularly, as well as routine cleaning and disinfection of equipment and areas throughout the facilities.

The mental health of our residents, their families and our staff were negatively impacted due to the restrictive visitation protocols in place to protect everyone's health. However, there were no resident discharges from either Leahi or Maluhia despite the imposed

constraints. From a financial standpoint, this pandemic has adversely affected our facilities' revenues and expenditures in several areas. For example, our facilities continue to maintain a designated unit to temporarily quarantine new admissions, re-admissions, and all residents who may have had a possible exposure to COVID-19. While this safety measure greatly aids in reducing the risks of infection to our general resident population, it also resulted in a significant decrease in the available bed space at our facilities because the number of residents assigned to the designated "quarantine" unit has been much less than the overall capacity of the unit. This decrease led to contraction of our daily resident census which, in turn, has decreased our revenue.

Similarly, CMS and other health agencies have issued numerous rules restricting the number and method by which people may visit or utilize long-term care facilities. In light of such rules, the only feasible option for compliance and to protect our long-term care residents from COVID-19 infection was to temporarily close the Adult Day Health Centers at both Maluhia and Leahi. While we have been able to repurpose the Adult Day Health employees to fill staffing gaps in our long-term care operations, the revenues from the Adult Day Health programs have ceased.

Securing adequate staffing is another operational challenge that our facilities continue to face during this pandemic. To alleviate some of the strain, we have repurposed employees from other departments to assist in clinical care and approved overtime for existing nursing staff when necessary.

To facilitate thorough and appropriate responses to the foregoing and other COVID-19 issues, the Oahu Region created a regional COVID-19 leadership team soon after the pandemic began that meets regularly to discuss implementation of the guidance and regulatory requirements set forth by the DOH, CDC and CMS. Through this leadership team, we have been able to develop a litany of safety measures including, but not limited to: (1) routine surveillance of the region's residents encompassing regular measurement of vital signs and oxygen saturation levels; (2) pre-shift screening procedures for all employees and visitors, establishment of COVID-19 nursing units and protocols that will be activated in the event of a positive COVID-19 resident; and (3) comprehensive training modules for clinical and other staff.

### **Strategic Planning**

The Oahu Regional Board of Directors and Management previously completed a Strategic Plan that was submitted to the Legislature in December 2019. Briefly stated, the Strategic Plan focused on the growing needs of our aging population and the anticipation that, in the next 5-10 years, it is projected that an additional 1,100 long-term care beds will be necessary for our aging population. The Strategic Plan also focused on the escalating and immediate demand for behavioral health housing and services for the growing population with mental health and substance use disorders. In an effort to address the foregoing needs, the Oahu Region, working in tandem with the Department of Health ("DOH"), proposed legislation (introduced as SB628 SD2 HD2 CD1 and signed into law as Act 212 SLH 2021) to transition its facilities from HHSC into the DOH.

While we are actively working with the DOH on the transition, both agencies continue to collectively and individually provide care and treatment for vulnerable populations in the community.

From the collective perspective, in a collaboration with DOH Adult Mental Health Division (AMHD) and Care Hawaii, we have been able to establish and continue to successfully operate a Group Home on the Leahi campus. Originally opening as a proof of concept pilot for a handful of individuals in December 2019, the Palekana Residential Program now provides more than twenty four (24) adults with serious mental illness and co-occurring substance disorders a warm, welcoming and safe environment where personnel are supportive, encouraging, and professional. Referrals into Palekana are received and approved by the AMHD from the Hawaii State Hospital (HSH) and community based mental health providers.

Palekana facilitates a team approach in its provision of independent living skills and supportive services twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week. Services are designed to rehabilitate with individualized treatment goals to support a successful re-integration into the community under the least restrictive level of care. Treatments are focused on relapse prevention and recovery, and provide residents with the opportunity to participate in structured therapeutic programs while being able to reside, albeit under professional supervision, in the community. Activities include group counseling, education, skill building, recreational therapy, and family services to gain access to necessary medical and rehabilitative services to reduce psychiatric and substance abuse addiction symptoms and develop optimal community living skills.

Additionally, the Oahu Region and DOH have recently begun discussions to re-establish the DOH's COVID-19 contact tracing center on the campus of Leahi Hospital. This endeavor would entail the movement of 25-50 contact tracers from Convention Center to a more permanent location.

On the individual level, the Oahu Region has been exploring other ventures to address emerging community needs such as long-term COVID-19 beds, SNF/ICF support for acute facilities to alleviate overcapacity, and dialysis services.

In regard to the transition of the Oahu Region into the DOH, specific details on status and development/implementation of the plan are anticipated to be presented to the legislature through a separate briefing along with reports from the Act 212, SLH 2021 Working Group.

## **Nursing**

Leahi Hospital and Maluhia provide long-term and post-acute care to the frail, aged and disabled population generally with dementia and other chronic conditions. The pandemic has affected the overall census at Leahi Hospital and Maluhia with an average census of 80% with the complexity of the health conditions of residents continuing to be greater than in previous years, with many residents being afflicted with multiple chronic conditions with mental/behavioral, physical, and functional impairments.

The challenges of COVID-19 continue to impact the ability to safely accept admissions and protect the health of all residents and staff. Early this calendar year when the COVID-19 vaccines became available, both facilities worked with Walgreens and

successfully vaccinated a majority of residents and staff. Leahi and Maluhia have a 99% rate of fully vaccinated residents. Likewise, the rate of fully vaccinated staff is currently 98% and 99% respectively at Leahi and Maluhia. Recently, both facilities offered the COVID-19 booster dose to our residents and encouraged staff to receive their booster dose in the community. While the percentage of “boosted” residents and staff continues to increase, the most recent rate was already over 80%.

On November 12, 2021, CMS revised their Nursing Home Visitation guidance where visitation must now be allowed for all residents at all times. To safely comply with this change in visitation, we continue to adhere to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention and are striving to have all residents and staff receive their vaccine booster dose.

The Oahu Region facilities have successfully passed the annual re-licensure and COVID-19 Infection Control focus surveys and achieved a CMS 5-star and 4-star rating for Maluhia and Leahi Hospital, respectively

### **Quality Assurance Performance Improvement**

We have conducted our Annual Resident and Family Satisfaction Surveys. Along with questions related to food, comfort, privacy, choice, safety, and staff – to which most residents remained content – residents were asked additional questions about the effects/impact that COVID-19 and its restrictions (e.g., drastic reduction in social activities) have had on their well-being and quality of life (e.g., loneliness, isolation, etc.). Unsurprisingly, we confirmed through the surveys that the COVID-19 visitation restrictions have greatly impacted families and how they’ve had to adjust to maintain some form of communication with their loved ones. Through regular updates from our facilities to the residents and families with information about how we are handling COVID-19, including restrictions, dealing with positive cases, testing, current State and Federal mandates affecting the nursing home, we have at least been able to help them understand all of the factors impacting their current living conditions at our facilities. In further consideration of the feedback from the residents and families regarding the care that they are receiving, we will continue to determine new and innovative ways to improve our communication and services.

Maluhia has been able to sustain our Falls Rate (better than benchmark), with continued efforts to reduce Alarm usage. We have also been able to sustain our Medication Error Rate (better than benchmark), with continued efforts to reduce unnecessary Medication use. Resident Satisfaction in 2021 remains at 100% for “Would you recommend Maluhia to others?”

COVID-19 related Performance Improvement Project Team was formed with Improvements seen for Hand Hygiene at 99.1%

As our facilities continues to navigate through the ever-changing regulations throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, maintaining clear communication and immediate response/updates with staff, residents, and families are of utmost importance. Also, early identification of any potential areas of expected decline due to COVID-19, as mentioned above, will help the Interdisciplinary Team provide immediate intervention and resources to residents and families.

## **Locally Sourced and Scratch Cooked Food – Oahu Region and Beyond Green Partners**

Oahu Region partnered with Beyond Green Partners (BGP), a consulting firm committed to training facilities to develop a healthy, prosperous food system that promotes scratch-cooked foods, local food sourcing and minimizing waste. The vision of the program focused on improving the well-being, mental health and comfort of the residents, Day Health participants and the Meals on Wheels recipients. Other program benefits included culinary techniques training to the food service employees and better utilizing kitchen space to manage on-time and quality food production, resulting in decreased food cost per meal.

To accomplish the vision, Maluhia and Leahi Hospital conducted tasting events for the residents and participants to evaluate and enjoy. Soon after, BGP and the food service departments developed new menus to meet the residents' desired preferences. Through this program, our facilities have been able to experience the benefits of eating healthy, buying local and minimizing waste. Maluhia and Leahi Hospital will continue to promote scratch-cooked foods and seek new local food sources to support Hawaii's economy. Recently, the Oahu Region was able to secure a grant from the Ulupono Initiative to purchase much needed kitchen supplies that will be utilized towards this end.

### **Personnel**

Full Time Equivalent ("FTE") figures are as follows:

FY 21 – 453.79

FY 20 – 438.65

FY 19- 428.28

### **Financial Picture**

Approximately 80% of the Oahu Region's residents receive benefits through Hawaii's Med-Quest Medicaid program. The Oahu Region's revenues and cash flow are dependent on the reimbursement rates and timeliness of payments provided by the Medicaid programs, despite being inadequate to cover our actual inflationary shortfalls.

Given the low Medicaid reimbursement rates, inflation and the increased costs of providing quality health care, the Oahu Region remains unable to maintain its provision of services without continued General Fund support from the Legislature.

Moreover, as described more fully above, the COVID-19 pandemic has led the Oahu Region to experience a significant reduction in operating revenue due to a decrease in available bed space and temporary closure of our Adult Day Health Programs. The pandemic has also caused an increase in expenditures due to additional expenses for required COVID-19 testing and purchase of supplementary personal protective equipment (PPE). PPE costs are currently five to ten times greater than pre-pandemic prices. Between March and June 2020, the negative impact on operating revenues and additional expenditures to purchase PPE was approximately \$1M and \$200K, respectively.

Fortunately, to defray some of the financial loss, the Oahu Region received aid through the COVID-19 Aid, Relief and Economic Security (“CARES”) Act stimulus and Leahi received a Payroll Protection Plan loan. Nevertheless, as a consequence of continuing COVID-19 prevention efforts and treatment of potential COVID-19 infections, the Oahu Region’s operating revenues and expenditures will continue to be negatively affected and we will require much needed assistance to cover the shortfall.

### **Risk Management**

Improving the residents’ quality of life and providing individualized care are areas that we focus on every day. An annual staff education fair is conducted to provide current information on a variety of topics including; infection control, protected health information, IT security, resident rights, and patient safety. Throughout the year, our staff also attended education and training sessions provided by the Healthcare Association of Hawaii, American Health Care Association, and Mountain Pacific Quality Health. Since the COVID-19 public health emergency was declared, the staff regularly receive updates on best practices for resident care and safety in nursing homes. In turn, we update our protocols to incorporate new regulations to keep the residents and staff safe from the devastating effects of COVID-19. In addition, we consistently communicate with the family members on all COVID-19 facility updates through e-mail, family meetings via Zoom and phone calls.

### **The Leahi-Maluhia Foundation**

The Leahi-Maluhia Foundation was established in 2003.

#### **Mission**

To support the work of Leahi and Maluhia Hospitals, also known as Leahi Hospital and Maluhia Long Term Care Center in their mission, development, and the provision of quality health and long term care.

#### **Vision**

The Leahi – Maluhia Foundation provides gap funding to boost and expand the quality of life for patients. The Foundation supports Leahi and Maluhia the same way that Parent Teacher Associations support public schools. It proactively identifies and funds ongoing improvements to ensure that patients and their families experience unparalleled excellence throughout their healthcare journey.

#### **Board of Director Members for FY 2021**

Michelle Kato, President  
Jane Schramko, Vice-President  
Jerilyn Yamashiro, Director  
Sean Sanada, Director  
Sean Simmons, Director  
Neal Yanagihara, Director

Total Private Donations:	\$11,330
Total Fundraising:	N/A
Total Federal/State/Private Grants	<u>1,295</u>
Total:	\$12,625

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