

Geographic Disparities in Cancer  
Care for Kaua'i Patients

Tami Ramil, RN BSN OCN  
Oncology Nurse Navigator



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About me



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About me

- Graduated from the University of Hawai'i, Mānoa 2000
- Oncology 2006 – present
  - Kaua'i Medical Clinic
  - Wilcox Medical Center Infusion Services
  - Kaiser Permanente of Washington Oncology Infusion Center
- Nurse Navigation 4/2019 - present
- Oncology Certified Nurse 2007 – present

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3

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## Kauai

- Population 72,293 <sup>1</sup>
- 8.5% fall below FPL <sup>1</sup>
- ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) = 44% <sup>2</sup>
- 3 hospitals on island
- 1 Oncologist / 1 APRN
- 1 Infusion Center



<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2019 Estimates  
<sup>2</sup> United For ALICE, 2018 Hawaii State Overview

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4

## Barriers to care on Kauai

- No PET/CT access on island
- Limited access to specialists and specialized procedures
- No in-patient chemotherapy services
- Limited transportation options



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5

## Imaging

- PET/CT
- MRI breasts
- MRI – patients with pacemakers

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6

## Limited access

- Specialists
- Gamma Knife
- Robotic prostatectomy
- Oncoplastic surgery
- Breast reconstruction
- In-patient chemotherapy not available at Wilcox



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7

## Case study

- 47 year old male with distant history of cancer, recurrence 14 years later.
- Single parent to 17 year old and 1 adult child living on the mainland.
- Single income household on TDI with employer based coverage.
- Mother, main support person was recently diagnosed with cancer

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8

## Case study - Barriers

- Physical barriers
  - Pain
  - Constipation, fatigue, sleep
- Emotional barriers
  - Coping
- Treatment barriers
  - Required in-patient chemotherapy
- Transportation barrier
  - Flight, ground transportation, lodging
- Financial barrier
  - Insurance coverage terminated



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9

10

## Case study - Assistance

- Kaua'i Hospice & Palliative Medicine Partners
  - Only Hospice and Outpatient palliative care service on Kaua'i.
  - Nursing support, Chaplain, Social Work

Patients	2019	2020
Hospice	256	156
Palliative	20	20

- Treatment
  - Provider communication
  - Navigation communication

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10

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11

## Case study - Assistance

- Transportation
  - HMSA's Care Access Assistance Program
  - ACS Hope Lodge, Road to Recovery
- Financial Barrier
  - During treatment patient's insurance was terminated
  - 82% of Single Male-Headed Families are below ALICE Threshold<sup>1</sup>
  - Med-QUEST

<sup>1</sup> United For ALICE, 2018 Hawaii State Overview

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11

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12

## Case Study - Conclusion

Patient was able to complete his in-patient chemotherapy. He is now in surveillance.

*"It is during our darkest moments that we must focus to see the light."*  
*-Aristotle*



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12

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