

# WHAT CAN YOU OFFER?



# GET READY, STAY READY

**HCV Prior Authorization in HI**

April 26, 2023 • NASTAD VLC • Thaddeus Pham (he/him) • Hawai'i Dept. of Health • [Thaddeus.pham@doh.hawaii.gov](mailto:Thaddeus.pham@doh.hawaii.gov)

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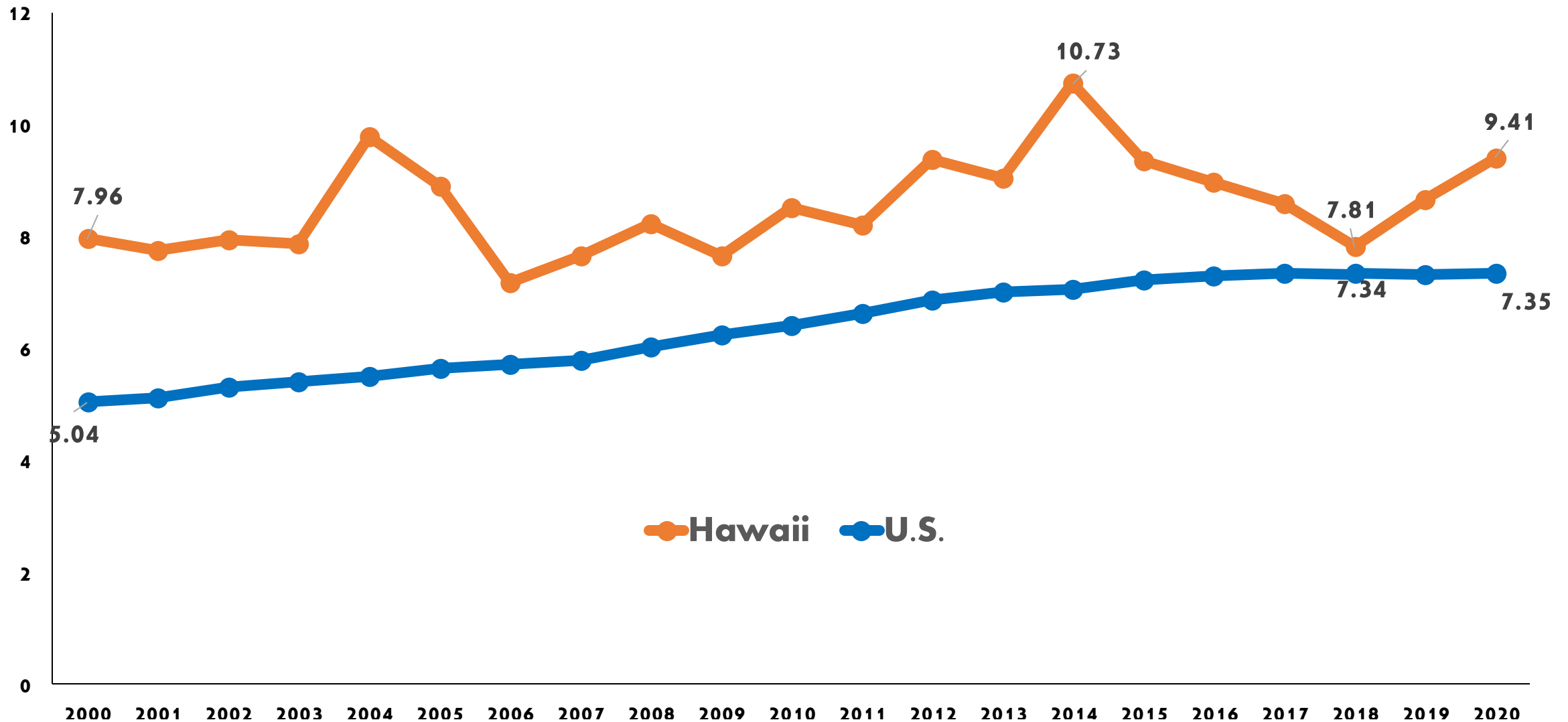


**WE CAN  
SAVE LIVES**

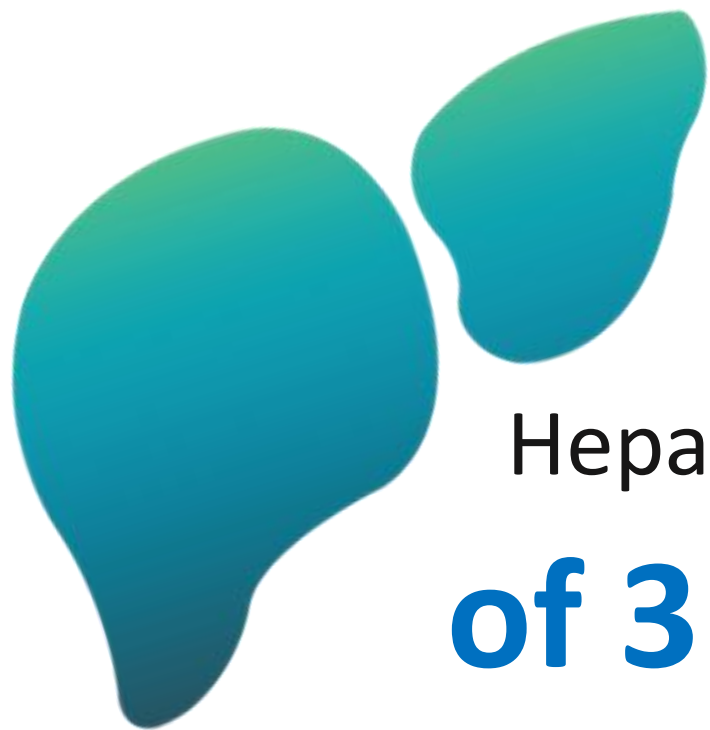
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# Liver\* cancer mortality rates\*\*, Hawai'i vs US



\*including intrahepatic bile duct cancer \*\*age-adjusted rates per 100,000; source: <https://health.hawaii.gov/harmreduction/new-hep-b-mortality-article/>



Hepatitis B and C account for **2 out of 3 of liver cancer cases** in Hawai'i.

Sources: Wong et al, AJS 2015





HCV-associated mortality averages

**20 years of  
shorter life,**

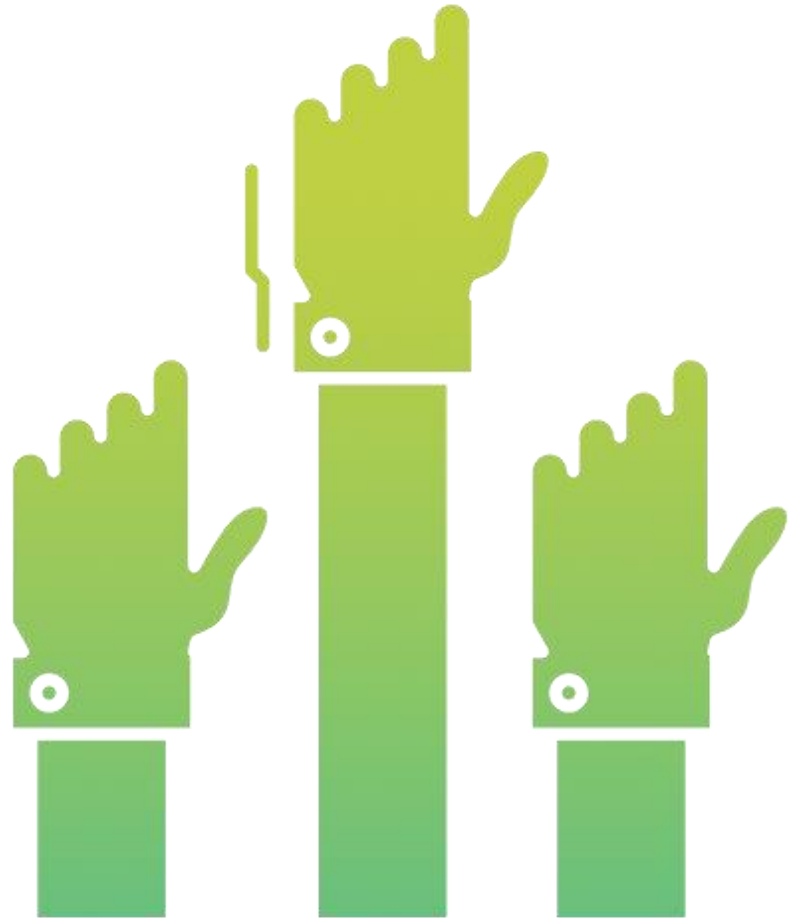
compared to the rest of the state  
(2016-2017).



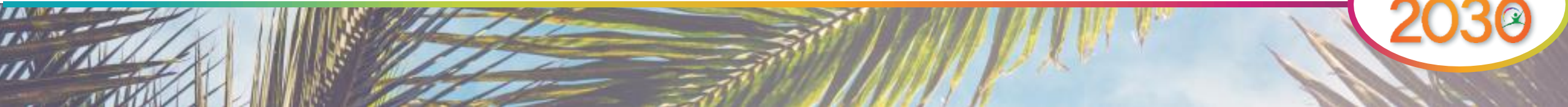
Hawai‘i has the **highest proportion of Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and Asian deaths** among HCV-listed deaths (2016-2017), compared to other states.

Ly, et al. 2020. CID. <https://academic.oup.com/cid/article/71/5/1149/5581721>

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**WE HAVE  
A PLAN**





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**HEP FREE 2030:**

**THE HAWAI'I**

**HEPATITIS**

**ELIMINATION**

**STRATEGY**

**2020-2030**





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# Mission and Vision

## Mission

- To empower Hawai'i 'ohana to promote liver health and wellness
- To raise awareness and increase access for the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of liver disease, especially viral hepatitis and related harms
- To erase stigma, social and racial inequity, and health disparities surrounding communities affected by liver disease

## Vision

- To create a Hawai'i free of hepatitis and other liver disease
- To promote liver health by integrating culturally appropriate services within a comprehensive system of care



# Values in Practice

- Harm Reduction
- Social Justice
- Intersectionality
- Aloha

**"OUR FIGHT AGAINST HEPATITIS IS ALSO A FIGHT AGAINST STIGMA, DISCRIMINATION, AND INEQUITY."**

*- HFH Steering Committee Member, whose uncle had hepatitis B*



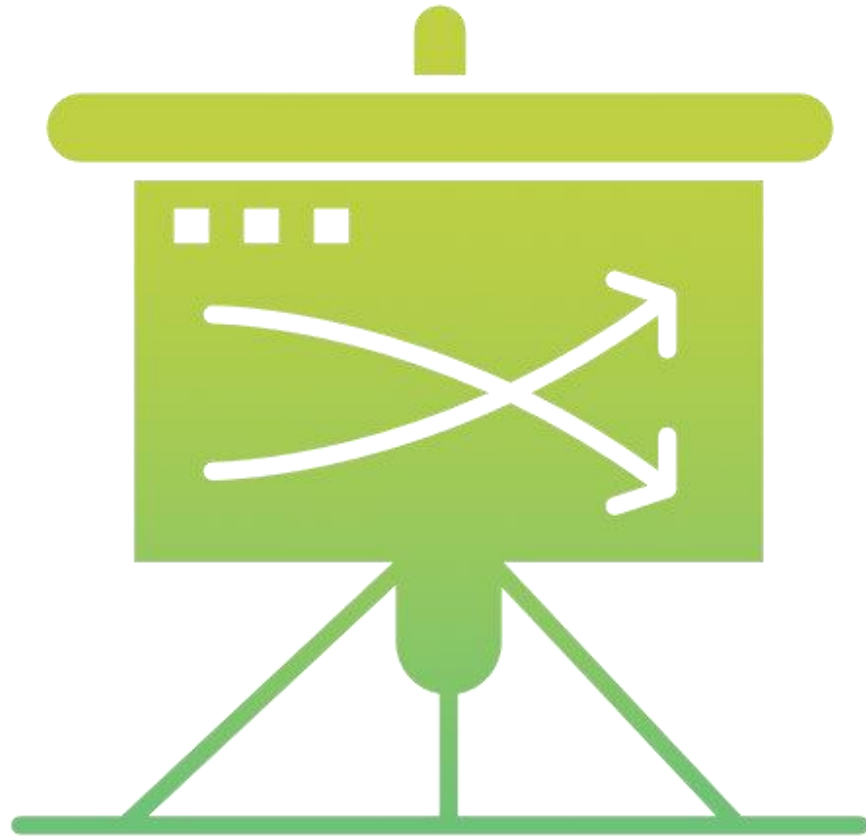
# Hep Free 2030 Priorities





**WE HAVE  
PARTNERS**

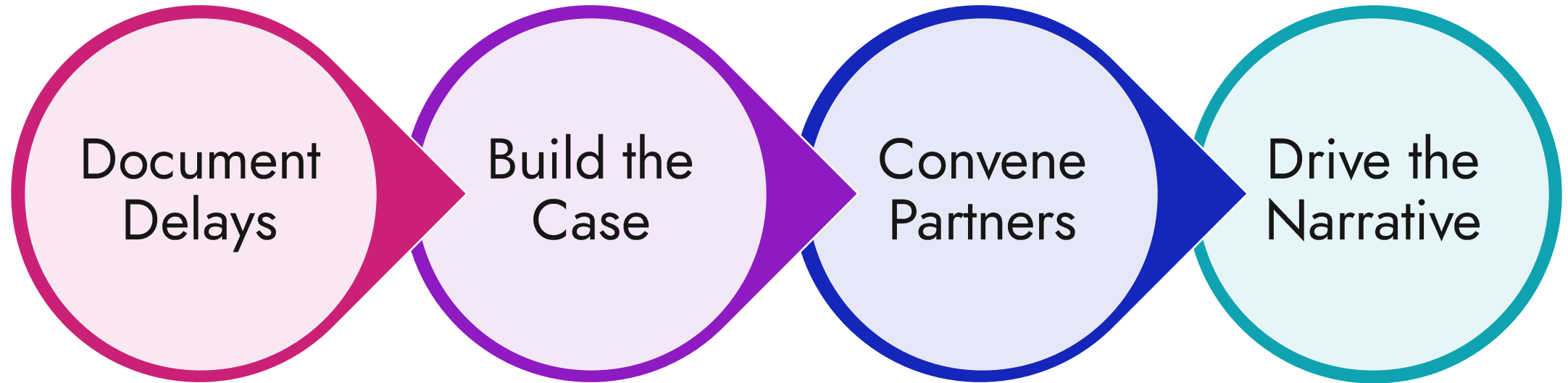




**WE CAN DO  
( & LOOK )  
BETTER**



# Prioritize Prior Authorizations



Drive the  
Narrative

## Access Denied: CHLPI at Harvard Law School and NVHR Launch New Analysis of How State Medicaid Programs Perpetuate Inequities in Hepatitis C Treatment

*The Hepatitis C: State of Medicaid Access project dives deeper into the role that state Medicaid programs play in progressing towards a country free of viral hepatitis.*

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WASHINGTON, D.C. (June 22, 2022) – The Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation ([CHLPI](#)) at Harvard Law School and the National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable ([NVHR](#)) today launched the next phase of [Hepatitis C: State of Medicaid Access](#), a project that evaluates hepatitis C virus (HCV) treatment policies across state Medicaid programs and advocates for policy change to

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# Hepatitis C: State of Medicaid Access Report Card

## Hawaii



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Grade	Recommendations to Improve Patient Access
<b>D</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Remove prior authorization for HCV treatment.</li><li>• Remove substance use counseling requirement.</li><li>• Remove requirement for prescribers to consult with a specialist.</li><li>• Ensure transparency and parity across FFS and MCOs regarding HCV coverage criteria.</li><li>• Remove additional restrictions as described below.</li></ul>

### State Overview

As of February 2022, 428,256 individuals were enrolled in Medicaid and CHIP.<sup>1</sup> As of 2016, an estimated 6,700 people were living with HCV in Hawaii.<sup>2</sup> Hawaii operates a Fee-For-Service (FFS) program and contracts with managed care organizations (MCOs) through what is known as the QUEST program.<sup>3</sup> Most beneficiaries, 99.9 percent,<sup>4</sup> are enrolled in QUEST which contracts with 5 MCOs: AlohaCare,<sup>5</sup> Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA),<sup>6</sup> Kaiser Permanente,<sup>7</sup> 'Ohana Health Plan,<sup>8</sup> and UnitedHealthcare Community Plan.<sup>9</sup> Each MCO maintains its own preferred drug list.<sup>10</sup>

Hawaii Medicaid FFS does not publish a preferred drug list as a discrete document, but provides a formulary lookup.<sup>11</sup>

June 23, 2022 via <https://stateofhepc.org/states/hawaii/>

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Deductions		Policy
Prior Authorization	-8	Prior authorization is required for all HCV treatment regimens. <sup>12</sup>
Fibrosis Restrictions		Hawaii Medicaid does not impose fibrosis restrictions. <sup>13</sup>
Substance Use Restrictions	-4	Hawaii Medicaid requires the prescriber to counsel patients regarding substance use prior to treatment: "Alcohol use and substance use are not absolute contraindications to DAA therapy," but the prescriber should evaluate the patient's ability to adhere to medication by considering "alcohol use and urine toxicology results." <sup>14</sup>
Prescriber Restrictions	-8	Hawaii Medicaid requires a prescription by or in consultation with a hepatologist, gastroenterologist, infectious disease specialist, HIV specialist, or "primary care physicians with expertise in the treatment of hepatitis C who are approved by the health plan." <sup>15</sup>
Retreatment Restrictions		Hawaii Medicaid does not appear to impose restrictions on retreatment. <sup>16</sup>
Access in Managed Care	-8	AlohaCare, HMSA, Ohana, and UnitedHealthcare impose more stringent requirements than FFS. AlohaCare requires documentation of genotype, <sup>17</sup> and requires prescribers to submit a separate E-Consult form to demonstrate they have consulted with a specialist. <sup>18</sup> (However, AlohaCare does not appear to impose any adherence or substance use requirements. <sup>19</sup> ) HMSA requires patients to agree to "no alcohol or illicit drug use during the course of treatment," does not cover retreatment for patients who were re-infected or whose prior treatment failed due to poor adherence to medication or substance use during treatment, and prohibits refills for lost or stolen medication. <sup>20</sup> Ohana requires urine toxicology within the past 30 days. <sup>21</sup> UnitedHealthcare requires documentation of genotype. <sup>22</sup> Kaiser Permanente does not publish HCV treatment coverage criteria. <sup>23</sup>
Additional Restrictions	-6	Hawaii Medicaid imposes additional restrictions as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RNA result must be collected within 3 months of request for treatment (i.e. time-based lab requirement)</li> <li>• Documentation of chronic HCV infection.</li> <li>• Documentation that the patient is "compliant with treatment . . . Patient should demonstrate good compliance with medications and appointments such as with specialty pharmacy, providers, and laboratory blood draws." Additionally, providers must assess "conditions that may impact adherence," including "mental health conditions," prior to the patient starting treatment.<sup>24</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Total Deductions</b>	<b>-34</b>	<b>Total Score [100-Deductions]</b> 66
		<b>Grade</b> D

June 23, 2022 via <https://stateofhepc.org/states/hawaii/>

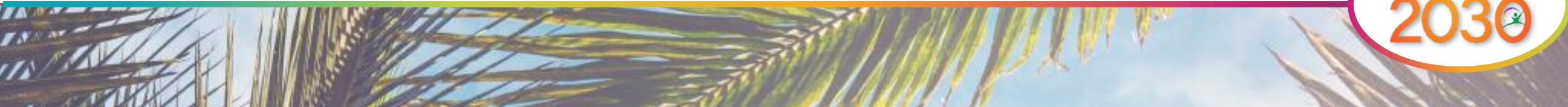


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Narrative

“Sadly, Hawai‘i received a “D” score, so we have work to do! If you would like to help improve our score, please review the attached and let us know how you would like to be involved.”



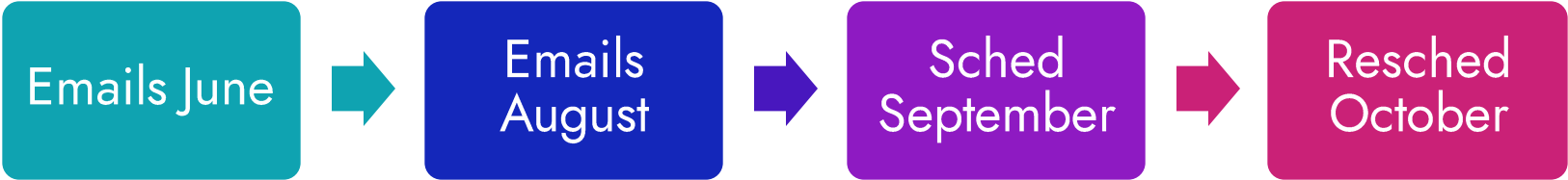
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# Immediate Response, Delayed Meeting



Med-QUEST Division





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Narrative

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**June 30, 2022**

**CONTACT:** Heather Lusk, Hep-Free Hawai'i Co-Director, [hlusk@hhrc.org](mailto:hlusk@hhrc.org)

## **HAWAII RECEIVES "D" GRADE ON HEPATITIS C TREATMENT ACCESS**

*Scorecard Assesses Treatment Restriction Policies Across State Medicaid Programs in 50 states, DC, and Puerto Rico; States Receiving an "A" Include Alaska, Idaho, Louisiana, and Indiana*

*Local Advocates Call for Changes to Prior Authorization Requirements  
& Removal of Other Barriers to Life-Saving Treatment*

(Honolulu, HI)—[Hep Free Hawai'i](http://www.hepfreehawaii.org) (HFH), a local coalition dedicated to increasing access to viral hepatitis and harm reduction services across the state, today called for state policymakers and decisionmakers to eliminate persistent barriers to curative treatments for hepatitis C (HCV).

<https://www.hepfreehawaii.org/press>

**HepFree  
2030**

## Remove hepatitis C treatment barriers

By Christina Wang  
and Heather Lusk

Hepatitis C is one of the most prevalent viruses in the United States, impacting over 2.4 million people nationwide and an estimated 6,700 to 20,000 people in Hawaii. Hepatitis C is a leading cause of liver cancer, and our state has one of the highest rates of liver cancer in the United States. Despite the availability of lifesaving treatments, many island residents experience inequities and systemic barriers that frustrate their access to needed care.

The geography of Hawaii makes it difficult for many islanders to access basic medical care. Those who are not in Honolulu face difficulties accessing a primary care provider or specialist. Rural residents also have difficulty obtaining medications that require a specialty pharmacy to fill. Pair these inherent barriers with those that are rooted in the healthcare system, such as requirements to obtain an approved prior authorization for hepatitis C treatment and specialist consultation, and many residents living with hepatitis C are left with limited options to seek treatment.

Prior authorization can cause a significant delay in the time it takes for a person to receive treatment due to administrative requirements associated with the process, leading to fewer prescriptions being filled and fewer patients being treated. Access to medication based upon evidence-based treatment guidelines are also often rejected in the prior autho-

ate treatment. Prior authorization requirements, along with substance use and prescriber requirements, fail to further the health of our community.

The state of Hawaii should lift all prior authorization restrictions on hepatitis C treatment if our state is to help gain ground on the World Health Organization's (WHO) goal to eliminate viral hepatitis by 2030. Last year, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) declared viral hepatitis a "winnable battle," meaning that significant progress can be made in a relatively short period of time. Local advocates, including Hep Free Hawaii, are now working on a strategy to eliminate hepatitis C, and hepatitis A and B, by 2030.

A recent report, "Hepatitis C: State of Medicaid Access," graded Hawaii's Medicaid program a "D" in its hepatitis C treatment access abilities, in large part because of prior authorization and other prescription requirements. Meanwhile, 14 states across the country have removed prior authorization for hepatitis C treatment for most state Medicaid beneficiaries entirely, as the treatment access landscape has changed over the past several years.

### ISLAND VOICES



*Christina Wang, top, is a nurse practitioner in Honolulu specializing in infectious disease; Heather Lusk is executive director of Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center and co-director of Hep Free Hawaii.*

hepatitis C as a public health threat by 2030. Additional resources should be dedicated to populations that account for a large percentage of those living with hepatitis C in our community, including people who use drugs and people who are un-

housed. The costs of non-treatment far exceed the costs of effective treatment, as the complications of non-treatment may include liver cancer care and death. Treatment should be available in settings where people already receive services, such as primary care offices, community clinics, syringe services programs, substance use treatment centers, and carceral facilities. Hawaii should also increase the number of primary care providers treating

hepatitis C.

In July, the viral hepatitis community around the globe recognized World Hepatitis Day to raise awareness around the global burden of the virus. Mahalo to Gov. David Ige for issuing a proclamation in support of World Hepatitis Day. This year's World Hepatitis Day theme was "Hepatitis Can't Wait" — a fitting call to action that all healthcare stakeholders must heed.

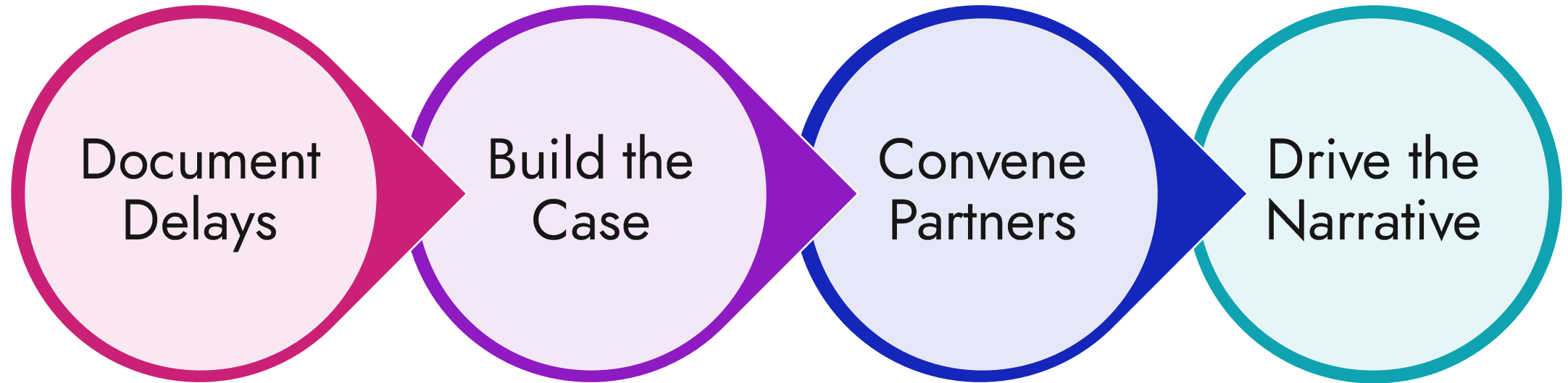


<https://www.staradvertiser.com/2022/08/28/editorial/island-voices/remove-hepatitis-c-treatment-barriers/>





# Prioritize Prior Authorizations

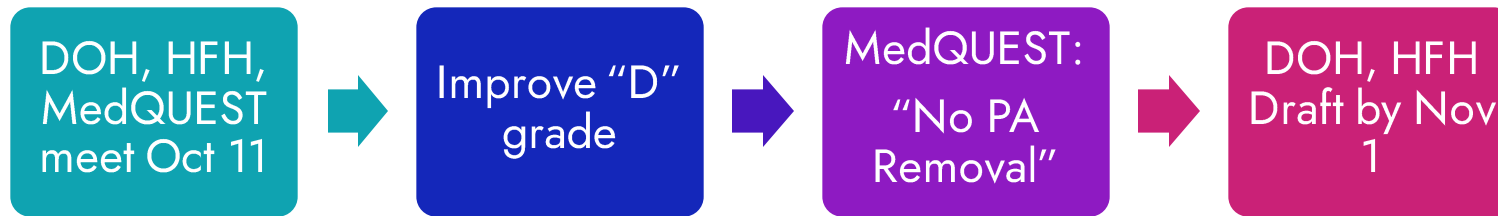




**WE CAN  
IMPROVE  
QUALITY**

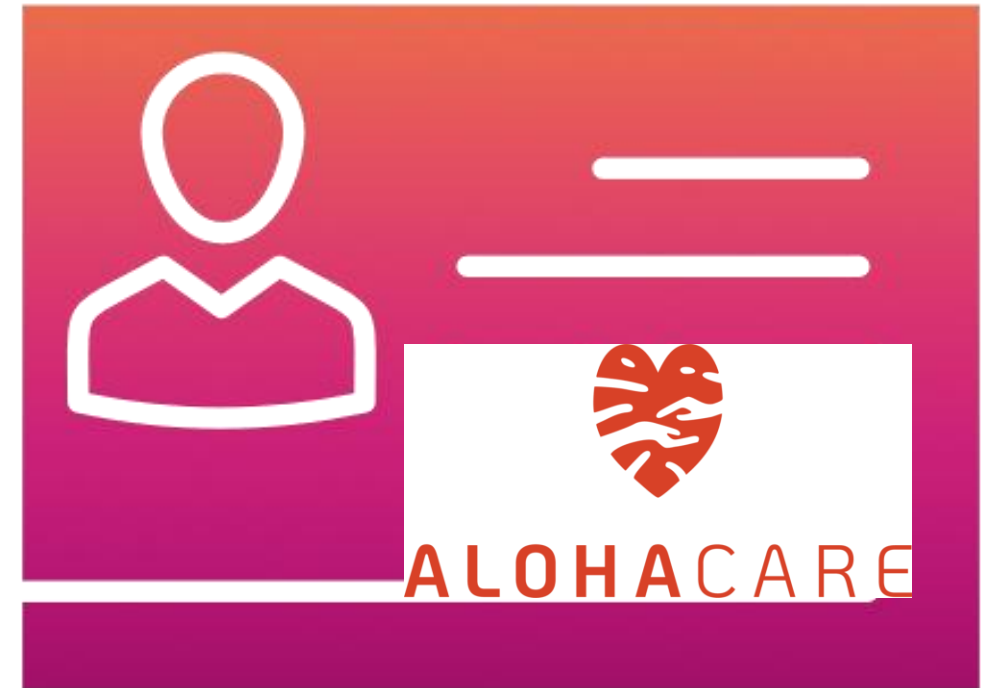
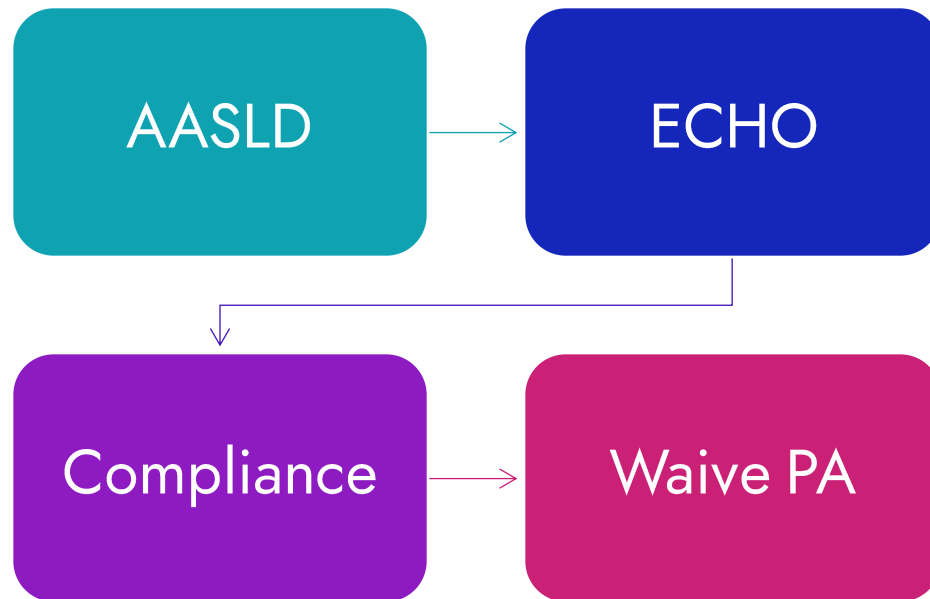


# We Can Draft a Memo...



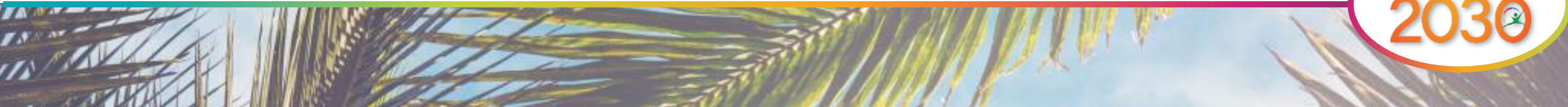
Med-QUEST Division

# ...or a Provider “Gold Card”





**WE CAN  
SHOW  
THANKS**





“For treatment regimens following the AASLD- IDSA HCV Guidance, there will be no prior authorization [bold added].”

<https://www.hepfreehawaii.org/news/medquest-reduces-hep-c-restrictions>





Kept most of draft language

Focus on AALSD adherence

Limit Managed Care restrictions

“Approval” to waive PAs

<https://www.hepfreehawaii.org/news/medquest-reduces-hep-c-restrictions>



# MedQUEST Reduces Hep C Restrictions

Drive the Narrative



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
January 18, 2023

CONTACT: Heather Lusk, Co-Director, Hep Free Hawai'i, [hlusk@hhrc.org](mailto:hlusk@hhrc.org)  
Christina Wang, Medical Director, Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center, [cwang@hhrc.org](mailto:cwang@hhrc.org)

**Hep Free Hawai'i Applauds Med-QUEST Memo Reducing Barriers to Hepatitis C Treatment**

*Policy Change Will Expand Access for Under Resourced Patients Under National Best Practice Guidelines & Strengthen Hawai'i's Hepatitis Elimination Efforts*

*Move Comes after Hawai'i Receives a "D" Grade in 2022 Nationwide Report*

*Hepatitis C Virus a Leading Cause of Liver Cancer in Hawai'i*

(Honolulu, HI)—Hep Free Hawai'i (HFH), a local coalition dedicated to increasing access to viral hepatitis

<https://www.hepfreehawaii.org/press>



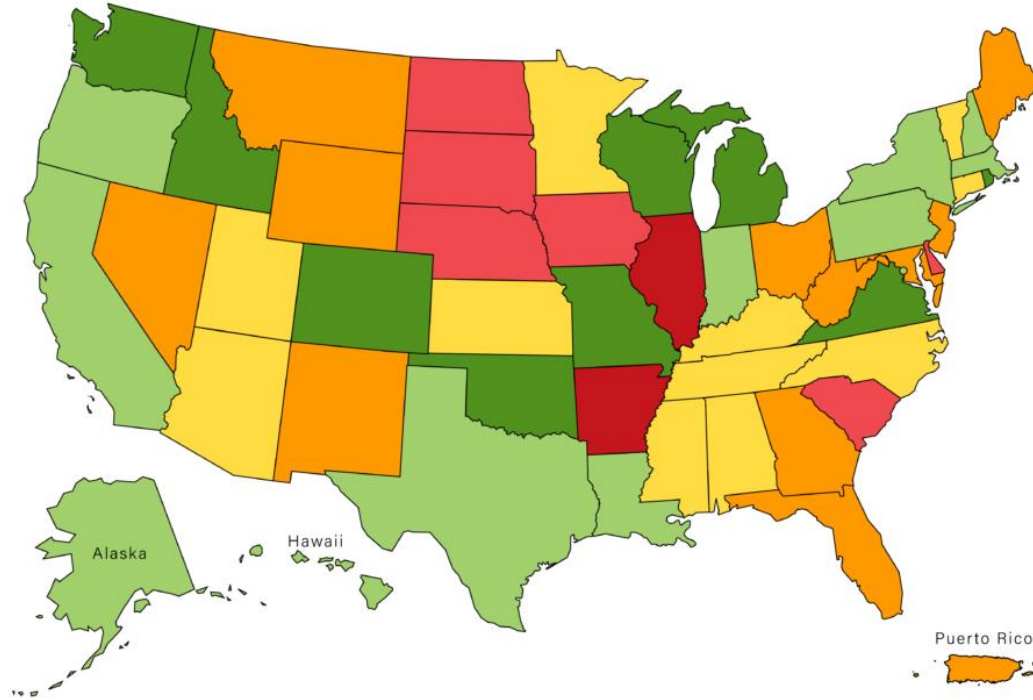




HEPATITIS C  
STATE OF MEDICAID ACCESS

OVERALL STATE GRADES  
FEBRUARY 2023

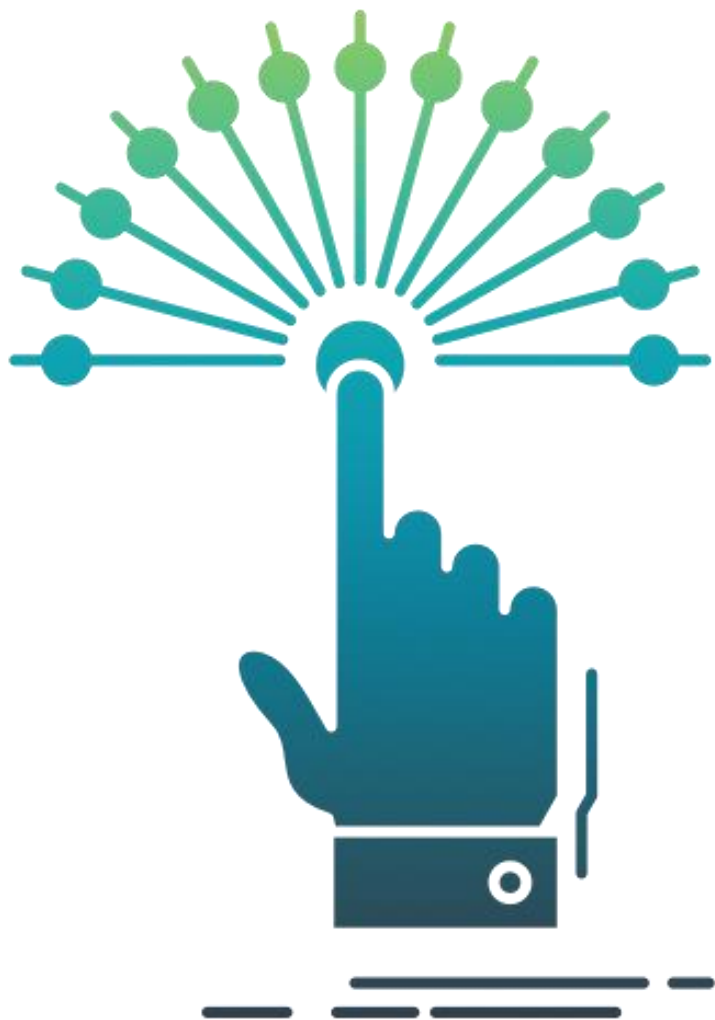
Drive the  
Narrative



- A-** PA removed for most patients; no other restrictions
- A** PA removed for most patients OR PA required for all patients; minimal restrictions
- B** PA removed for most patients; some restrictions OR PA required for all patients; minimal restrictions
- C** PA required for all patients; some restrictions
- D** PA required for all patients; many restrictions
- F** PA required for all patients; harsh restrictions

<https://www.hepfreehawaii.org/news/grade-a-for-hawaii-medicaid>





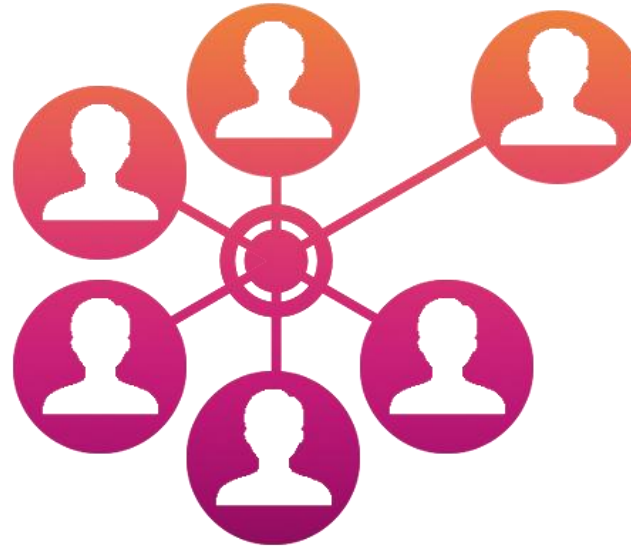
**WE CAN  
DO MORE**



# FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

**IMPLEMENT  
"GOLD CARD"**

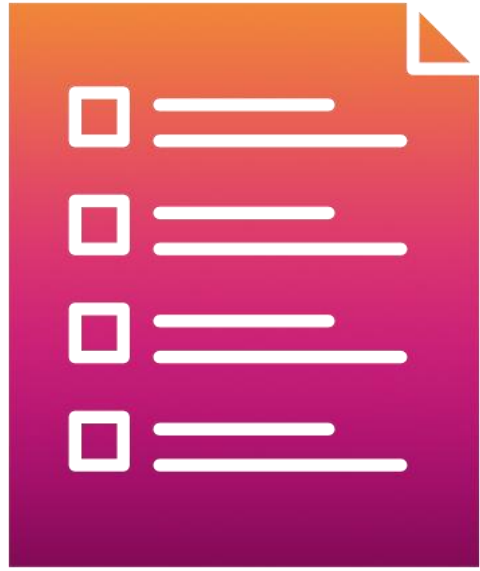
**RECOMMEND  
ATTESTATION**



**LEGISLATIVE  
BRIEFING**

**DRAFT SIGN-ON  
LETTER**

**PARTNER W  
SINGLE MCO**



# WHAT CAN YOU OFFER?