

VA/DoD Pacific Telehealth Hui Strategic Plan



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A. Strategic Direction

The vastness of the Pacific region and the nation creates both a major challenge and a unique opportunity for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Defense (DoD) to provide quality healthcare services in remote and rural communities.

To meet this challenge, the VA and the DoD formed a partnership, The VA/DoD Pacific Telehealth Hui (Hui) between the VA Medical and Regional Office Center, Honolulu, Hawaii (VAMROC) the Pacific Regional Medical Command (PRMC) for the purpose of leveraging their strengths and resources to improve the quality, accessibility, patient satisfaction, and cost-effectiveness of healthcare services provided to beneficiaries through the use of emerging and existing telehealth technologies.

The Hui is a unique, first-time partnership aimed at supporting the creation of a seamless integrated comprehensive healthcare system conforming to a uniform standard of high quality care.

Responsibilities of the Hui include: Conducting research, identifying and analyzing needs to develop appropriate telehealth systems, innovative applications and solutions. These applications are prototyped, demonstrated, validated and documented.

The Hui collaborates with public and private sector customers, partners, and stakeholders. Successful outcomes can be utilized as templates for technology insertion and telehealth business worldwide.

Focused Strategic areas identified within the VA/DoD Pacific Telehealth Hui include:

1. Patient-Focused Telehealth;
2. Research, Concept Exploration and Clinical Evaluation;
3. Distance Learning and Continuing Health Education/Training;
4. Readiness and Business Plan Redesign;
5. Telehealth Technology Transfer Program;
6. Creating a gathering place for telehealth collaboration;

The VA/DoD Pacific Telehealth Hui is responsible for managing resources of the Hawaii Federal Health Care Partnership, which is chartered to optimize federal healthcare resources, providing federal beneficiaries with accessible, high quality, and cost effective healthcare. To address these strategic focus areas the Hui will leverage existing Pacific-based technology and healthcare informatics programs to provide telehealth solutions to federal beneficiaries.

The telehealth strategic direction and the expertise the VA and DoD bring to the Hui enable a leveraging of team empowerment to facilitate synergistic outcomes, positioning the VA/DoD partnership for future expansion and growth. The corporate leaders of the Hui are MG Nancy R. Adams, Commanding General, Tripler Army Medical Center and Mr. H. David Burge, Director, VAMROC, Honolulu.

B. Background

The genesis of the Hui (“partnership”) is a VA/DoD Memorandum of Understanding executed on August 16, 1999 by the VA Medical and Regional Office Center (VAMROC), Hawaii and the Pacific Regional Medical Command (PRMC) to jointly explore, develop, assess, and adapt clinical telemedicine applications to improve the healthcare of military personnel, veterans, and civilians through telehealth applications and technologies. In fiscal year 2000, Congress authorized the DoD to enter into agreements with the Department of Veterans Affairs and federally funded health agencies providing services to Native Hawaiians for the purpose of establishing a partnership similar to the Alaska Federal Health Care Partnership.

The Hawaii Federal Health Care Partnership (HFHCP) is supported by a Congressional appropriation in 2001 to optimize Federal healthcare resources and provide beneficiaries with access to quality, cost effective healthcare. By Congressional directive, resources of the Partnership will be managed by the Hui and will leverage existing Pacific-based technology and medical informatics programs. Generally, the agreement provides a formal structure for the VA and DoD to jointly sponsor telehealth and telecommunication projects. The Partnership will leverage resources of the VA and the Joint Program Office and be modeled after the Alaska Federal Health Care Partnership. The partnership will be able to facilitate delivery of healthcare to Native Hawaiian populations.

C. Resources and Capabilities

The Hui is built on the combined strengths of its constituent organizations that allow it to meet specific challenges and needs.

1. Strengths of Tripler Army Medical Center (TAMC)

- ◆ Clinical competencies
- ◆ Clinical research
- ◆ Demonstration and validity of technology
- ◆ Telehealth linkages to clinical settings
- ◆ Graduate medical education
- ◆ Leadership

2. Strengths of VAMROC, Honolulu

- ◆ Clinical competencies
- ◆ Research capacities
- ◆ Computerized patient record system and digital imaging capability
- ◆ Academic affiliations
- ◆ Leadership
- ◆ Graduate medical and continuing education
- ◆ Telehealth linkages to clinical settings

3. Challenges

- a. Limited healthcare resources in the federal system.
- b. Eliminating administrative, regulatory and organizational barriers for effective partnering in order to leverage available telehealth and health care resources
- c. The Hui must overcome inflexibility to create new and different kinds of solutions as the needs and opportunities presented by its member agencies shift.
- d. Lack of motivation and internal agency issues can prevent the establishment of a sustainable partnership.
- e. Demonstrating that investment in the Hui significantly benefits achievement of the mission of each partner.
- f. Fostering innovative telehealth research projects to improve access to care and health status for federal beneficiaries located in remote areas of the vast Pacific region.
- g. Migrating successful telehealth projects from a research to a sustained clinical environment.
- h. Providing added value to other public and private organizations through technology transfer of successful projects.

D. Vision, Mission, Strategic Goals

1. Vision Statement

“The Hui will become a leader for developing DoD/DVA healthcare partnerships to develop and facilitate telehealth and technology research and services,

education and training, while emphasizing the use of innovative technologies in all aspects of its endeavors.”

2. Mission Statement

As an essential part of the Hawaii Federal Health Care Partnership, the VA/DoD Pacific Telehealth Hui conducts research, develops prototypes, demonstrates, tests, evaluates, validates, then disseminates and institutionalizes applications of technologies in support of innovative health care processes in the area of telehealth.

The Hui supports and enables the provision of effective health education, continuing medical education, and postgraduate medical education, employing innovative technology with the aim of improving the quality of healthcare.

The Hui supports the improvement of access, coordination, continuity, and quality of health outcomes while controlling costs.

The Hui promotes the transfer of technology between US Government and other public and private sector agencies by building alliances to facilitate the sharing of resources and knowledge.

The Hui supports enhancement of patient knowledge and population health.

3. Strategic Goals

The Strategic Goals of the Hui are to:

1. Facilitate the Establishment of the Hawaii Federal Health Care Partnership Network

Strategic Objectives:

- Improve the health status of individuals throughout the Pacific.
- Create a seamless, integrated health care delivery system.
- Leverage the specific strengths and capabilities of partners to create a culturally sensitive, effective and expanding partnership.
- Become a gathering place for technology and telehealth expertise.

2. Support Improvement of the Health Status of Pacific beneficiaries

Strategic Objectives:

- Utilize telehealth technology to create patient focused health care designed to improve access to and quality of care.

- Conduct research to address questions related to causes, prevention, and treatment of illnesses and disabilities.
- Emphasize patient education

3. Become Self-Sustaining in Five Years

Strategic Objective:

- Develop a comprehensive business plan that identifies sources and means of support sufficient to maintain and expand Hui projects and programs

Facilitate Transfer of Products, Applications and Capabilities Created Through the Hui to Private and Public Entities:

Strategic Objectives:

- Conduct evaluative research that can assess the value of telehealth and healthcare informatics.
- Continually explore the use of distance technology to support health and medical applications.
- Engage in technology transfer activities.

5. Contribute to Professional Development of Health Care Providers.

Strategic Objectives:

- Conduct research in healthcare informatics with emphasis on clinical applications.
 - Familiarize and train staff in cutting edge technology capabilities that support healthcare delivery via symposiums, CME/CEU sessions and other means
 - Sensitize professionals on the value of health care informatics and telehealth.

Guiding principles for all strategic objectives

- Create a first tier research organization via affiliation with academic institutions and other federal programs and agencies.
- Improve and implement lessons learned from other federal partnerships/alliances.
- Establish and employ outcome management techniques focused on clinical, cost, quality and access.
- Ensure return on investment outcomes are documented
- Conduct continual assessment, evaluation, and planning to identify current/future needs. Ongoing strategic planning is identified as a key feature of success.
- Focus on user friendly, needs driven and sustainable applications to heighten acceptance and implementation. Organizational structures and processes shall be implement to ensure enterprise activities meet user needs, requirements and priorities. These management practices shall be uniformly implemented.
- Emphasize technical training to enhance success of application/capability.
- Evaluation of success of projects and enterprise success focuses on meeting user requirements.

- Building working relationships with federal, academic, and community partners is crucial to success. Communications and public relations are identified and critical components to this effort.
- Establishing the partnership relationship, working together and communicating will be a critical factor for success. Continually revisiting, reviewing and renewing this relationship shall require effort.
- Projects will undoubtedly be undertaken that will be of greater interest and benefit to one or the other federal partner or affiliate. An “enterprise” approach shall be necessary with success defined by the achievement of common goals rather than the goals specific only to component partners.

E. Governance

The Hui will be governed through a structure that can be described as distributing functions over three levels. The three levels embody different but essential organizational elements. The first consists of the ultimate authorizing parties to the Hui. The second is the decisional level. The third is the operational level. The following depicts the Hui governance:

This rather unique governing form allows two organizations with different histories, cultures and missions to come together in pursuit of a common set of goals. It also allows cooperating with others such as: the University of Hawaii, John A. Burns School of Medicine and native Hawaiian healthcare organizations, which is critical for the eventual success of the Hui. At the same time it recognizes the need for very different knowledge and skill packages for those individuals serving as Executive Officers.

Guiding Principles for Governance

These principles guide the creation and operation of programs within the Hui and are consistent with its vision and mission.

- Operate in an atmosphere of trust and respect while managing expectations between institutions.
- Agency representatives treat each other as equal partners.
- Seek consensual decision making whenever possible
- Work toward a common vision/mission
- Leverage the strengths of the key partner agencies and institutions.
- Maintain uniqueness of VA and DoD entities while seeking to create a new blended culture that involves professional/medical values and practices, scientific research, and managerial/entrepreneurial elements.
- Build new linkages and alliances.
- Seize opportunities and take risks.
- Be accountable for failures as well as successes.

- Employ performance metrics to measure outcomes and ensure project costs schedules, and performance are within acceptable levels.
- Emphasize teamwork.
- Equally distribute project leadership.
- Be innovative.
- Function in a multi-tasking environment.

Level One VA/DoD Pacific Telehealth Hui Authority, comprised of the VAMROC-Honolulu Director and the PRMC Commanding General, approves the vision, mission, and strategic plan. This level is also responsible for authorization of goals, purposes, aims, and strategic directions of the Hui.

Policy creation and monitoring are level one responsibilities. This group focuses on providing direction for the organization, authorizing policies that guide movement in that direction, exercising oversight to ensure that the direction is achieved, and selecting key management officers.

Level Two is where the key management decisions for the organization are made. These focus on planning, the creation and distribution of resources, the creation and initiation of level three activities and their implementation, establishing procedures for accountability, exercising oversight for Hui projects. Level Two is responsible for developing the business plan, initiating, advocating, and implementing new business practices supported by technologies. Level Two reports to the approval level.

Structurally, this level consists of The Executive Officer and Staff.

Execution is the core element of Level II with a focus on translating strategic vision and policy determined at level one into action. The management group develops programs and projects to achieve the organization's goals, works with developing sufficient resources to accomplish this, appoints personnel to do the determined tasks, and provides oversight at the project level.

Guiding Principles for Level Two Governance

Level II leadership shall assume a leadership role in initiating, advocating, and practicing new business practices supported by technologies

Level Three consists of project execution to achieve the goals and purposes of the Hui. Projects are organized into teams, each of which is focused on the achievement of specific outcomes. These teams perform the operational work of the Hui, whether that is oriented to and in support of research, education, service delivery, technology transfer, etc. Accountability is oriented to specified team outcomes. Results are assessed in terms of planning recommendations supplied to the management level through regularized reporting.

Appendix: Strategic Planning Process

This plan was developed by a joint VA/DoD planning committee composed of COL Thomas Sprague, LTC Rosemary Nelson, Mr. Craig Oswald, and Mr. Norman Dodd. Deane Neubauer, Ph.D. of the University of Hawaii, facilitated this group. Dr. Neubauer met with the committee from its inception in April, 2000, facilitated a VA/DoD Strategic Planning Retreat on August 3, 2000 that provided important input to the process, and drafted the final report for committee approval. Initial planning began in April 2000.

VA/DoD Strategic Planning Retreat August 3, 2000

Participant List

Attendees:

Dr. Steve MacBride, Department of Veterans Affairs
Dr. Jim Hastings, University of Hawaii, John A. Burns School of Medicine
Hardy Spoehr, Papa Ola Lokahi
Dr. Lon White, Pacific Health Research Institute
Dr. Maurice Sprenger, Department of Veterans Affairs
COL Thomas Sprague, Tripler Army Medical Center
LTC Rosemary Nelson, Tripler Army Medical Center
COL Donald Person, Tripler Army Medical Center
Craig Oswald, Department of Veterans Affairs
CAPT Barry Cohen, TRICARE
COL Lee Briggs, Tripler Army Medical Center
Norman Dodd, Department of Veterans Affairs
Matt Kobayashi, MELE Associates, Inc.

Unable to Attend:

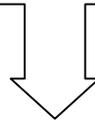
Dr. Richard Friedman, University of Hawaii, John A. Burns School of Medicine
Dr. Stan Saiki, University of Hawaii, John A. Burns School of Medicine
Dr. Adam Darkins, Department of Veterans Affairs
Dr. Webb Ross, Department of Veterans Affairs
Dr. Sarah Miyahira, Department of Veterans Affairs
Dr. Katy Lysell, Department of Veterans Affairs
CAPT Richard Jeffries, Tripler Army Medical Center
COL Kenneth Torrington, Tripler Army Medical Center
COL Leslie Raulin, Fort Detrick, MD
Dr. David Curb, Pacific Health Research Institute

Facilitator:

Level One:

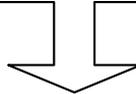
VA/DoD Pacific Telehealth Hui Authority
Commanding General Pacific Regional Medical Command, Director
VAMROC-Honolulu

(may include others as defined)



Level Two:

Executive Officer
(1.0 FTE, plus staff)



Level Three:

Project Managers/Support Experts

- 1.) Patient-Focused Telehealth
- 2.) Research, Concept Exploration and Clinical Evaluation
- 3.) Distance Learning and Continuing Health Education
- 4.) Telehealth Technology Transfer

Examples:
Potential Projects

- 1) Cardiology
- 2) Radiology
- 3) Mental Health
- 4) Orthopedics