



Health system Strengthening in the USAPIs: Implementing recommendations and the PHCI

Eileen S Natuzzi, MD, MPH, FACS

Affiliate Center for Australian, New Zealand and Pacific Island Studies,
Walsh SFS, Georgetown University

Solomon Islands country coordinator
ANZGITA International Training Association



Distance to Washington DC

- ▶ American Samoa - **6,997 miles**
- ▶ Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands (CNMI) - **7,790 miles**
- ▶ Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)
 - Chuuk - **7,971 miles**
 - Kosrae - **7,558 miles**
 - Pohnpei - **7,707 miles**
 - Yap - **8,409 miles**
- ▶ Guam - **7,935 miles**
- ▶ Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) - **7,049 miles**
- ▶ Republic of Palau (ROP) - **8,651 miles**

Prior hearings

- Health care systems of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands : Oversight hearing before the Subcommittee on Public Lands and National Parks of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, House of Representatives October 25, 1983
- Investigation into Health Care Disparities of US Pacific Island Territories: Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Human Rights and Wellness of the Committee on Government Reform, House of Representatives . February 25, 2004
- Pacific Partnerships for Health: Charting a Course for the 21st Century. Institute of Medicine, Committee on Health Care Services in the US Associated Pacific Basin. 1998

1984 congressional hearing	1998 IOM report	2004 congressional hearing	2024 CAPRI
Health workforce	Health workforce	Health workforce	Health workforce
Health infrastructure	Chronic diseases	Chronic diseases	Chronic diseases
OMR costs*	Health infrastructure	Health infrastructure	Health Infrastructure
	Health research and data	Medicare and Medicaid caps	Medical supply chains
	Establish Interagency Government Committee on PIC health	Medical Supply chain	Health research and data
	Establish Pacific Basin Health Coordinating council	Health research and data	OMR costs*
		OMR costs*	

Table one: Summary of health system issues identified in 4 reports on health systems in the US affiliated Pacific Islands from 1984 to 2024.

*OMR refers to Overseas Medical Referrals

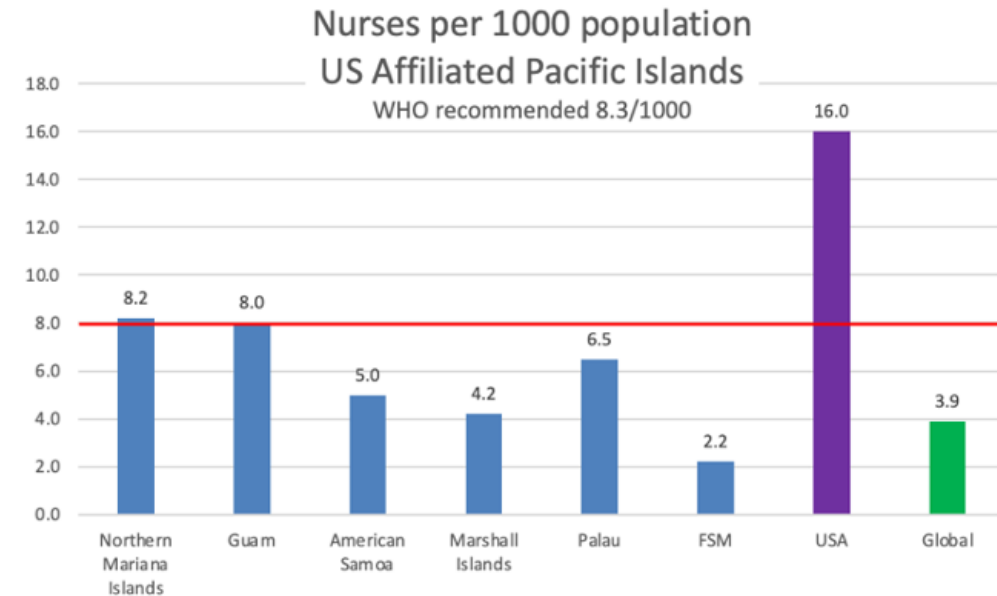
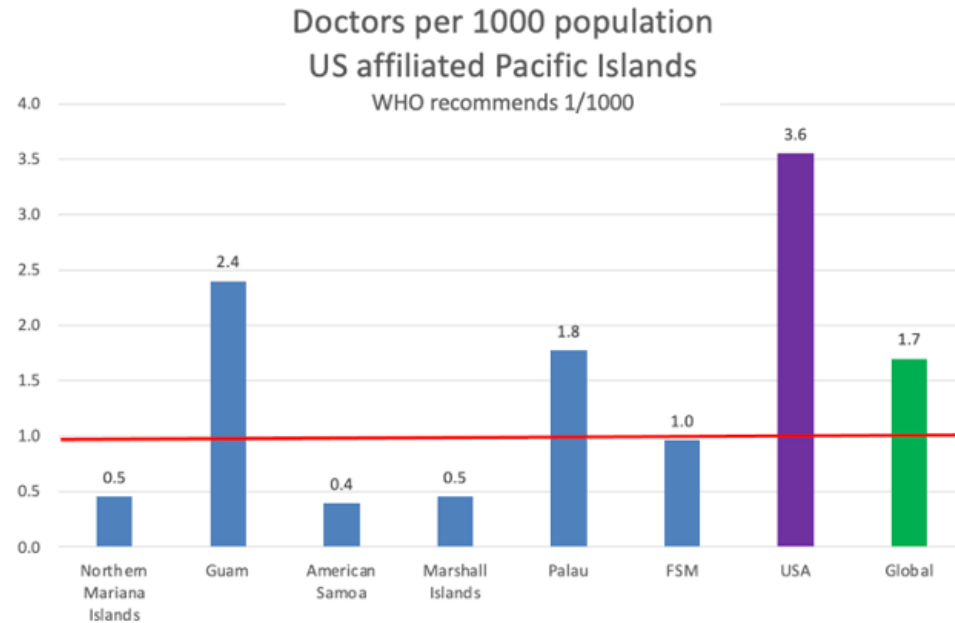


Figure 2: Doctors and nurses working in the USAPIC per 1000 population. Over 60% of countries are below WHO's minimum recommended population rate for health care workers.

Source: "National Health Workforce Accounts Data Portal," World Health Organization, accessed May 3, 2024, <https://apps.who.int/nhwportal/>.

Health system Infrastructure

- 54% of hospitals in USAPIs vulnerable to damage due to location
- 51% of population at risk of losing hospitals
- The USACE reports on Guam Memorial and LBJ Tropical Medicine hospitals needed extensive upgrades in order to meet JAHCO CMS standards



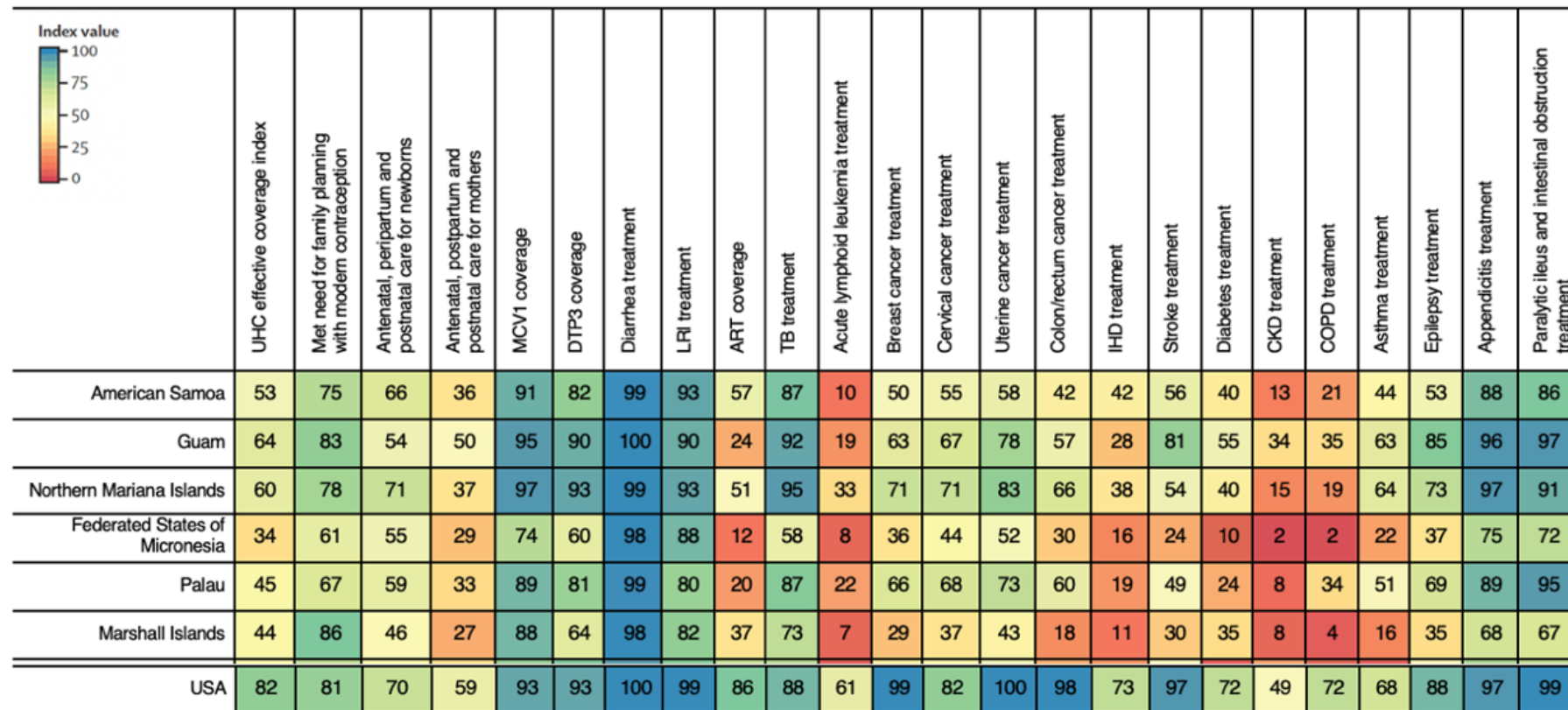


Figure 3: Progress toward achieving Universal Health Coverage in the US affiliated Pacific Islands.

Blue blocks indicate high treatment and education coverage for that essential service. Red blocks indicate low levels of available essential services. The United States is included at the bottom of the graph for reference. Abbreviations: DTP3 – diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis vaccine; MCV1 – measles-containing vaccine; TB – tuberculosis; LRI – lower respiratory illness; ART – antiretroviral; IHD – ischemic heart disease; CKD – chronic kidney disease; COPD – chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

Source: Global Burden of Disease Collaborative Network, “Global Burden of Disease Study 2019,” Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, 2020, <https://ghdx.healthdata.org/record/ihme-data/gbd-2019-uhc-effective-coverage-index-1990-2019>.



Pacific Health Care Initiative

- Create medical education partnerships between US medical universities and USAPI healthcare systems
- Strengthen workforce through linkages between Pacific Region's medical and nursing schools and US schools
- Address and upgrade vulnerable and crumbling health facility infrastructure
- Explore the practicality of creating regional Pacific medical centers of excellence for specialty care.
- Streamline USG programs, grants and funding sources for USAPIs
- Coordinate health system strengthening programs with other development partners working in the Pacific



Questions for discussion:

- What do you need to improve health care implementation?
- Does the current USG program and grant support system work for you?
- Is the application process for USG grants and funding complicated and time consuming?
- Are the regulatory reporting requirements for USG grants and funding complicated and time consuming?
- How should your concerns best be addressed?
- For research and policy purposes: would you be willing to share data on where your health care funding comes from?

US agencies and organizations addressing health in USAPI:

Department of Interior

Office of Insular Affairs

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

Department of Health and Human Services

Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA)

Bureau of Primary Health Care (BPHC)

Section 330

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

CDC

Office of Island Affairs

Veterans Affairs

EPA

US Department of Defense

USAID in FAS

Compacts of Free Association

Department of Housing and Urban Development

Peace Corps¹

Private and university partnerships and MOUs

- 
- US government Interagency Governmental Committee on Pacific Health (IGCOPH)
 - Pacific Basin Health Coordinating Council
 - Pacific Health Trust Fund