

HEALTH

TELEHEALTH

West Hawaii Community Health Center (WHCHC) to the Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA) Rural Health Network Development Planning Program (CFDA 93.912). The WHCHC proposes to establish a **Health-Justice Collaborative Network Planning Program**

LEADS BIPARTISAN, BICAMERAL EFFORTS IN CONGRESS TO EXPAND ACCESS TO TELEHEALTH

CONNECT FOR HEALTH ACT

Introduced The Most Comprehensive Legislation On Telehealth In Congress First introduced in [2016](#), Senator Schatz reintroduced a new version of the *CONNECT for Health Act* in April 2021. The updated bill would increase access to health care for Medicare beneficiaries, was endorsed by over [170 groups](#), and was joined by over half of the Senate as [cosponsors](#). Senator Schatz has been a committed advocate for telehealth. The Senator previously reintroduced updated versions of the bill in [2019](#) and [2017](#), and since its introduction in 2016, several provisions have been signed into law or adopted.

[Schatz Press Release, [04/29/21](#)]

Authored Provisions Of The *CONNECT For Health Act* That Became Law Or Were Adopted by Centers For Medicare And Medicaid Services (CMS) Several provisions of the *CONNECT for Health Act* have been enacted into law or adopted by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, including provisions to remove restrictions on telehealth services for mental health, stroke care, opioid treatment, and home dialysis. [Schatz Press Release, [04/29/21](#)]

- **The Centers For Medicare And Medicaid Services Adopted Telehealth Provisions From The 2017 and 2016 *CONNECT For Health Acts* Increasing Access To Telehealth And Other Remote Services Under Medicare** This was accomplished through regulations allowing CMS to expand coverage for remote patient monitoring services under Medicare starting in 2019. [Schatz Press Release, [07/13/18](#); Healthcare IT News [07/12/18](#)]
- **Four Provisions From The *Connect For Health Act* Were Included In The *CHRONIC Care Act* Which Was Enacted As Part Of The *Bipartisan Budget Act Of 2018***
 - Increasing access to digital tools for Medicare Advantage enrollees through telehealth and remote patient monitoring
 - Expanding the use of telehealth for individuals with stroke.

- Expanding access to home dialysis therapy
- Providing accountable care organizations the ability to expand the use of telehealth

[Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, Pub. L. 115-123, 02/09/18; Schatz Press Release, [02/09/18](#)]

- **Three Provisions From The *CONNECT For Health Act* Were Enacted Through The COVID-19 Relief Laws**

- Provides the Secretary of Health and Human Services the authority to waive Medicare telehealth requirements under Section 1834(m) of the Social Security Act.
 - Allows Federally Qualified Health Centers and Rural Health Clinics to provide telehealth services.
 - Allows for use of telehealth in the recertification of eligibility for hospice.
- [Schatz Press Release, [04/29/21](#); Schatz Press Release, [03/04/20](#); Sections 3704 and 3706 of the CARES Act; Section 102 of the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2020 (P.L. 116-123)]

- **A Provision From The *CONNECT For Health Act of 2019* That Will Permanently Expand Access To Mental Health Care Through Telehealth Was Signed Into Law As Part Of The Annual Appropriations Bill** [Schatz Press Release, [12/28/20](#); Section 123 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (P.L. 116-260); *CONNECT for Health Act* (S. 2741)]

OPIOID CRISIS

Led On Legislation Signed Into Law Expanding The Availability Of Telehealth For Substance Abuse Treatment And Funding Opioid Addiction Research The *Opioid ECHO Act* and the *eTREAT Act* were included in the *SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act* which became law in 2018. The measures fund training, based on the ECHO model, in order to treat opioid addiction and increases access to telehealth to treat substance abuse. Senator Schatz introduced the *Opioid ECHO Act* and cosponsored the *eTREAT Act*. [Schatz Press Release, [10/03/18](#); mHealthIntelligence, [10/04/18](#); *SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act*, 2018, [H.R. 6](#)]

- **Cosponsored The eTREAT Act Which Was Enacted In The SUPPORT Act And Expanded The Availability Of Telehealth For Treatment Of Substance Use Disorders** Senator Schatz joined several Senate colleagues to introduce the *Expanding Telehealth Response to Ensure Addiction Treatment Act* or eTreat Act. The bill sought to help pay for telehealth treatment for opioid abuse by lifting Medicare restrictions. [Expanding Telehealth Response to Ensure Addiction Treatment Act or the eTREAT Act, [S.2901](#), 05/22/18; Becker's Hospital Review, [06/13/18](#)]

- **Introduced the *Opioid ECHO Act* which passed as part of the *SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act*** Introduced the *Opioid ECHO Act* which allows the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to give preference in awarding grants on a competitive basis to entities that utilize technology-enabled collaborative learning and capacity building models. [SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act (H.R. 6)]

EXPANDING CAPACITY FOR HEALTH OUTCOMES (ECHO) ACTS OF 2016 AND 2019

Enacted Medical Tele-Training Bills Senator Schatz drafted the *2016 ECHO Act*, which became law after passing [unanimously](#) in the Senate. The legislation increased access to high-quality health care in hard-to-reach regions through technology. In 2019, Senator Schatz [introduced](#) the *ECHO 2019 Act*, which built on the findings of the 2016 iteration and became law as Section 313 of the December omnibus/COVID relief law (P.L. 116-260). [Schatz Press Release, [12/31/20](#); Schatz Press Release, [12/15/16](#); ECHO 2019 Act, [S.1618](#)]

LEADERSHIP

Advocated To Make The Expanded Access To Telehealth Services Permanent Senator Schatz led bipartisan groups of lawmakers calling for the permanent expansion of access to telehealth services due to expire following the COVID-19 pandemic. Senator Schatz and his colleagues sent letters to congressional leadership, highlighting the benefits and growing use of telehealth as well as the urgency to make permanent. Senator Schatz is committed to this issue and has pointed to [data](#) from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services showing the expanded and widespread use of telehealth services during the COVID-19 pandemic. [Schatz Press Release, [12/04/20](#); Schatz Press Release, [06/15/20](#); Telehealth Extension Letter, [01/28/22](#); mHealthIntelligence, [02/01/22](#)]

Passed A Resolution To Designate A Telehealth Awareness Week In The Senate

Senator Schatz led a resolution to designate September 19-25, 2021, as “Telehealth Awareness Week,” which was agreed to in the Senate by unanimous consent on September 23, 2021. The resolution highlights the role of telehealth in the health care system and fuels support for Congress to act on telehealth legislation. The resolution also includes information on the benefits of telehealth and telehealth utilization during the pandemic. [Schatz Press Release, [09/22/21](#)]

Raised Concerns With The FCC Regarding The FCC’s Lack Of Transparency Related To Its COVID-19 Telehealth Program

Senator Schatz joined Representatives Anna G. Eshoo (D-CA) and Don Young (R-AK) as well as Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) in a letter to the FCC, urging “greater transparency on FCC’s COVID-19 Telehealth Program” after the FCC announced “it had exhausted the funding” appropriated through the CARES Act. [Congresswoman Eshoo Press Release, [07/23/20](#)]

Served As A Resource To Hawaii On COVID-19 Telehealth Resources And Relief Laws

Senator Schatz served as a key resource to the people of Hawaii in understanding and accessing relief from the multiple COVID relief laws and had a key role in supporting the state’s COVID

response. This included a COVID-19 resource guide updated continuously with information on the new and increased access to telehealth in Medicare. In addition, Senator Schatz promoted CARES COVID-19 Telehealth Program to health care providers in the state and helped applicants in the state resolve problems with their applicants at the FCC. [Senator Schatz: Coronavirus Telehealth Services, last updated on [12/29/20](#)]

VETERANS

Fought To Increase Funding For Veterans Including Millions More In Telehealth Funding And Continues To Push For Permanent Telehealth Services As lead Democrat on the Senate Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee, Senator Schatz pushed to support and improve the delivery of health care for veterans. In 2018, he worked to secure more funding than President Trump's request for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Services and Medical Community Care accounts. He successfully included \$30 million more than the president's budget request for expanding telehealth. Senator Schatz has also advocated for "VA leaders not only to make sure the new telehealth options are preserved but also to see if there are steps for Congress to expand rules and regulations to make that happen." [Schatz Press Release, [09/12/18](#); Energy and Water, Legislative Branch, and Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act, 2019 ([H.R.5895](#)); Military Times, [06/23/21](#)]

Cosponsored A Comprehensive Veterans' Benefits Bill Authorizing Services And Programs Including The Development Of A Plan To Improve Health Care Services In Rural Areas The *Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act of 2014* would help to give the VA resources it needs to support veterans and their families. A measure in the legislation required the VA develop a plan for improving access and quality of health care services for veterans in rural areas which includes leveraging telemedicine technologies. [Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act of 2014 ([S.1982](#)); Schatz Press Release, [02/25/14](#)]

Introduced Legislation Expanding Telehealth Access To Help Provide Health Care For Pacific Island Veterans Senator Schatz introduced legislation which would create a three-year pilot program to provide hospital care and medical services to veterans living in countries that have entered into the Compact of Free Association with the United States. Veterans in the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia would receive direct care with the use of telehealth and other health services. [Schatz Press Release, [04/29/19](#); Compacts of Free Association (COFA) Veterans Review Act of 2019, ([S.1222](#)); mHealthIntelligence, [04/30/19](#)]

HEARINGS/TOWN HALLS

Confirmed With The Director Of The Indian Health Service That Telehealth Is Working And Discussed The Need To Make Pandemic Telehealth Services Permanent During the Senate Indian Affairs Committee hearing on Native American Health during COVID-19, Senator Schatz asked Director Weahkee, the Director of the Indian Health Service (IHS), about the "the

need” to make permanent the changes made to telehealth access. Director Weahkee agreed “it is a mode of care that we have turned to in Indian country for quite some time” and spoke about the “rapid growth, rapid expansion” of telehealth. [IHS Director Weahkee, Senate Indian Affairs Committee Holds Hearing On Native American Health During The New Coronavirus, [07/01/20](#)]

Communicated The Benefits Of Telehealth To A Kauai Resident Concerned With The Lack Of Treatment Options “Workers rights, human rights and ways to get involved in government were some of the topics Kauai residents had for U.S. Sen. Brian Schatz on Friday. About 200 people attended a town hall meeting at Chiefess Kamakahelei Middle School... Susan Storm asked Schatz about a telehealth bill. ‘My husband died two years ago from complications to Parkinson's disease. On this island, there is no specialist and only one neurologist. So we always had to fly somewhere to get treatment,’ she said. ‘I'd like to know how you can help us get the specialists we need on the island.’ Telehealth is a way for people to get treatment they need quickly and efficiently. It also helps people pool their resources, Schatz said. ‘We have good specialists if you aggregate them across the state of Hawaii and make sure they're available on all the islands,’ he said. He said he is working on a bill which would expand telehealth services in Medicare, improve care outcomes, make it easier for patients to connect with their health care providers and cut costs for patients and providers.” [The Garden Island, [06/03/17](#)]

Spoke About The Benefits Of Investing In Telehealth In Native Communities Severely Impacted By COVID-19 In February 2021 during a legislative session, Senator Schatz spoke about the severe impact COVID has had on Native Americans and the benefits of telehealth for rural and isolated communities. The Senator noted that “expanding telehealth so that more people can get the specialty care they need wherever they are is a game changer for Native communities.” [Congressional Record Vol. 167, No. 20, [02/03/21](#)]

TELEHEALTH FUNDING

Nearly \$4 Million For The Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center And Kokua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Family Services To Expand Telehealth Senator Schatz announced new federal funding of nearly \$4 million for the Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center and Kokua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Family Services on Oahu through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Optimizing Virtual Care (OVC) program. The funds help the health centers expand and improve their virtual care programs, including telehealth. [Schatz Press Release, [02/17/22](#)]

\$1,500,000 In CARES Act Funds Which Can Be Used To Expand The Use Of Telehealth Services Senator Schatz announced \$1,500,000 in funds authorized by the *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act* for Hawai‘i. The funds can be applied to support the health care system during the COVID-19 pandemic and specifically can be used to expand the use of telehealth services. [Schatz Press Release, [06/04/20](#)]

\$320,535 Award To The University Of Hawai‘i To Launch Telehealth Pilot Project Secured \$320,535 in funding through the Federal Communications Commission’s (FCC) Connected Care Pilot Program for the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) at the University of Hawai‘i

to help launch the telehealth project that focuses on expanding access for low-income, veteran, and vulnerable patient populations. [Schatz Press Release, [06/17/21](#)]

\$20 Million Nationwide Funding To Support Telehealth Services For Opioid Treatment Telehealth Addressing the Opioid Epidemic—\$20 million (nationwide), new funding. This funding supports telemedicine and distance learning services to help address the opioid epidemic in rural America. [Schatz Press Release, [03/22/18](#)]

2018: Supported The FCC Vote To Move Ahead With A \$100 Million Telehealth Pilot Program As lead Democrat on the Senate Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, Innovation and the Internet, Senator Schatz released a statement thanking Commissioner Carr and the Federal Communications Commission “for looking at new ways to extend the benefits of telehealth to more veterans and families who are still struggling to get the care they need” with the Connected Care Pilot Program. [Schatz Press Release, [08/02/18](#)]

\$828,571 Federal Grant For The Pacific Basin Telehealth Resource Center At The University Of Hawai‘i Senator Schatz announced new federal funding to expand telehealth services in Hawai‘i during the pandemic. Awarded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the \$828,571 federal grant for the Pacific Basin Telehealth Resource Center at the University of Hawai‘i will support telehealth resources in Hawai‘i. [Schatz Press Release, [04/23/20](#)]

Wrote A Letter Of Support For The QMC’s Grant Application To The Health Resources And Services Administration’s Telehealth Network Grant Program The Pacific Basin Telehealth Resource Center at the University of Hawaii and the Queen’s Medical Center (QMC) asked Senator Schatz to send a letter of support for QMC’s grant application to the Health Resources and Services Administration’s Telehealth Network Grant Program. The funds provided an opportunity to develop telehealth capability in ambulances for stroke patients.

BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT

Introduced Legislation To Expand Access To Rural Telehealth Services Senator Schatz introduced the *Reaching Underserved Rural Areas to Lead (RURAL) on Telehealth Act* in 2016 and reintroduced the bill in 2017. The Act would expand access to rural telehealth services, allowing non-rural hospitals and health care providers serving rural areas to qualify for support from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF). Congress established the HCF as part of the Universal Service Fund (USF) to support advanced telecommunications and information services for eligible health care providers who use these services to conduct telehealth activities. [Schatz Press Release, [07/14/16](#); Schatz Press Release, [06/21/17](#); Reaching Underserved Rural Areas to Lead on Telehealth Act of 2016, [S.3218](#); Reaching Underserved Rural Areas to Lead on Telehealth Act (RURAL) of 2017, [S.1377](#)]

Pushed For The FCC To Increase Funding Or Subsidies For The Rural Health Care Program To Help Expand Telehealth Access During COVID-19 In March and August of 2020, Senator Schatz led bipartisan groups of senators demanding the FCC increase funding or

subsidies to health care providers through the Rural Health Care Program to support telehealth services. [Schatz Press Release, [03/18/20](#); Schatz Press Release, [08/21/20](#)]

Urged Congressional Leadership To Include \$2 Billion In The Next Coronavirus Relief Package To Expand Telehealth Services Through Investment In Broadband Senator Schatz led a bipartisan group of senators urging Senate and House of Representatives leadership to include \$2 billion in the next coronavirus relief package to help health care providers expand telehealth services by improving their broadband access. In a letter, the senators are calling for \$2 billion in additional funding for the Rural Health Care (RHC) Program. [Schatz Press Release, [05/11/20](#)]

Introduced Legislation Seeking \$2 Billion In Funding To Help Health Care Providers Increase Their Broadband Capacity And Expand Telehealth Senator Schatz introduced the *Health Care Broadband Expansion During COVID-19 Act*. The new bipartisan bill directs \$2 billion to help health care providers increase their broadband capacity and expand telehealth services during the COVID-19 pandemic. The funds provide additional support for the Rural Health Care (RHC) Universal Service Program which would ensure providers have the resources to improve and increase telehealth services. [Schatz Press Release, [05/22/20](#)]

Advised Agencies On Federal Funding For Broadband Connectivity Advised Department of Education, DEBDT, Office of Hawaiian Affairs on federal funding in CARES for broadband connectivity for telehealth and distance learning. Senator Schatz also advised them on private offerings from companies.

TELEHEALTH MODERNIZATION ACT

Served As The Democratic Lead On The Bipartisan *Telehealth Modernization Act* Joined Senate colleagues to introduce the *Telehealth Modernization Act*, a bill that “would update coverage restrictions that have long prevented life-saving telehealth services for many of the nation’s roughly 61 million Medicare beneficiaries.” Senator Schatz described the legislation as one that “works hand in hand with the CONNECT for Health Act by removing unnecessary barriers in Medicare and making it easier to keep using telehealth moving forward.” [Scott Press Release, [02/23/21](#)]

<https://www.schatz.senate.gov/news/press-releases/congress-set-to-pass-more-than-8-billion-in-emergency-coronavirus-funding-including-at-least-45-million-for-hawaii>

COVID-19

FUNDING

\$47.9 Million FEMA Grant To Support Local Hospitals Fighting The COVID-19 Pandemic And Hire Nearly 1,000 New Nurses And Medical Staff [Schatz Press Release, [01/19/22](#)]

\$3,704,731.64 For The Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency In New Federal Funding
Funding awarded to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) serves to cover the costs of personal protective equipment (PPE) for health care workers and first responders throughout the state. It was awarded after Hawai'i was granted a Presidential Disaster Declaration to help the state respond to COVID-19. [Schatz Press Release, [06/05/20](#)]

\$3,340,633 Funding For The Hawai'i Department Of Health To Help Prepare For And Respond To Infectious Disease Outbreaks, Including The Current COVID-19 Pandemic
[Schatz Press Release, [07/20/20](#)]

Cosponsored Legislation That Would Provide An Additional \$1 Billion To The CDFI Fund To Boost Local Economies In Communities That Were Disproportionally Affected By The COVID-19 Pandemic The Community Development Financial Institutions Fund [Coronavirus CDFI Funding Act, 2020 ([S.4294](#))]

Called On The Department Of Health And Human Services To Establish Clear Reimbursement Guidelines States And Local Governments For Costs Incurred While Assisting The COVID-19 Federal Response [Schatz Press Release, [02/13/20](#)]

\$1,188,723.75 In Federal Funding To Cover The Cost Of Meals For Certain High Risk Individuals In Hawai'i [Schatz Press Release, [01/28/21](#)]

Reimbursement from FEMA to states [Schatz Press Release, [02/11/21](#); [03/29/21](#)]

Following calls from Senator Schatz and others, President Biden restores full 100 percent reimbursement for National Guard's COVID-19 response [[1/21/21 press release](#), see also 11/24/20 letter [here](#)].

<https://www.staradvertiser.com/2021/03/09/hawaii-news/hawaii-to-receive-over-6-1b-in-federal-funds/>

<https://www.schatz.senate.gov/news/press-releases/hawaii-receiving-more-than-45-million-in-federal-funding-to-respond-to-coronavirus-outbreak>

<https://www.schatz.senate.gov/news/press-releases/hawaii-set-to-receive-16-million-to-support-rural-hospitals-expand-telehealth-capacity-during-pandemic>

<https://www.schatz.senate.gov/news/press-releases/schatz-hawaii-set-to-receive-at-least-4-billion-in-federal-coronavirus-relief-funding-additional-federal-aid-expected>

<https://www.schatz.senate.gov/news/press-releases/senate-passes-major-coronavirus-aid-package-includes-at-least-12-billion-for-hawaii-expanded-unemployment-assistance-direct-cash-payments>

<https://www.schatz.senate.gov/news/press-releases/schatz-votes-to-pass-coronavirus-relief-package-calls-for-more-federal-aid-to-help-people-left-out>

PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT (S. 3309)

Reintroduced Legislation To Create A Permanent Funding Mechanism For A Quick Response In The Event Of Public Health Emergencies [Schatz Press Release, [02/19/20](#)]

CARES ACT/ APPROPRIATIONS ACT OF 2021

<https://www.schatz.senate.gov/news/press-releases/schatz-hawaii-hospitals-and-providers-receiving-more-than-33-million-to-stay-operational-and-cover-cost-of-covid-testing-treatment>

<https://www.schatz.senate.gov/news/press-releases/schatz-hawaii-receiving-at-least-213-million-to-boost-covid-19-testing-contact-tracing>

<https://www.schatz.senate.gov/news/press-releases/schatz-more-than-5-million-headed-to-hawaii-to-support-seniors-and-people-with-disabilities-during-pandemic>

<https://www.schatz.senate.gov/news/press-releases/schatz-more-than-130-million-in-new-federal-funding-heading-to-hawaii-to-help-hospitals-health-care-providers-respond-to-coronavirus-pandemic>

<https://www.schatz.senate.gov/news/press-releases/schatz-help-available-for-hawaii-seniors>

<https://www.schatz.senate.gov/news/press-releases/hawaii-health-centers-set-to-receive-more-than-10-million-in-new-federal-funding-for-coronavirus-response>

<https://www.schatz.senate.gov/news/press-releases/schatz-hawaii-receiving-58-million-in-new-federal-funding-to-support-rural-hospitals-and-community-health-centers-and-cover-cost-of-covid-19-care-testing-treatment>

<https://www.schatz.senate.gov/news/press-releases/schatz-hawaii-health-centers-set-to-receive-38-million-to-expand-covid-19-testing-contact-tracing>

<https://www.schatz.senate.gov/news/press-releases/kona-community-hospital-straub-medical-center-receive-nearly-12-million-in-new-federal-relief-funding-to-support-care-for-vulnerable-patients>

<https://www.schatz.senate.gov/news/press-releases/15-million-in-federal-funding-headed-to-hawaii-to-train-health-care-workers-expand-telehealth-purchase-ppe-during-covid-19-pandemic>

[Schatz Press Release, [08/24/20](#)]

<https://www.schatz.senate.gov/news/press-releases/schatz-nearly-95-million-headed-to-hawaii-for-covid-19-vaccination-distribution-testing-and-tracing>

<https://www.schatz.senate.gov/news/press-releases/schatz-hawaii-to-receive-more-than-1-million-to-support-targeted-outreach-buy-more-ppe-to-fight-pandemic-in-pacific-islander-communities>

<https://www.schatz.senate.gov/news/press-releases/schatz-391-hawaii-health-care-providers-to-receive-nearly-37-million-in-federal-covid-19-relief-funding-to-respond-to-pandemic-help-families-get-health-care>

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN

<https://www.schatz.senate.gov/news/press-releases/schatz-391-hawaii-health-care-providers-to-receive-nearly-37-million-in-federal-covid-19-relief-funding-to-respond-to-pandemic-help-families-get-health-care>

<https://www.schatz.senate.gov/news/press-releases/schatz-rural-hospitals-across-hawaii-set-to-receive-more-than-25-million-in-federal-funding-for-covid-19-testing-mitigation>

<https://www.schatz.senate.gov/news/press-releases/hawaii-rural-health-care-providers-to-receive-more-than-43-million-in-federal-relief-funding-to-cover-costs-help-families-get-health-care>

<https://www.schatz.senate.gov/news/press-releases/hawaii-to-receive-328-million-to-support-covid-19-vaccinations-statewide>

<https://www.schatz.senate.gov/news/press-releases/schatz-hawaii-health-centers-set-to-receive-more-than-7-million-to-expand-health-care-access-to-more-people-fight-covid-19-pandemic>

<https://www.schatz.senate.gov/news/press-releases/hawaii-set-to-receive-45-million-to-support-local-nursing-homes-protect-people-health-care-workers-from-covid-19-other-infectious-diseases>

SUPPLY CHAIN

MEDICAL SUPPLY CHAIN EMERGENCY ACT

Introduced Legislation To Force President Trump To Implement The Defense Production Act Of 1950 Requiring The Federal Government To Take Over The Medical Supply Chain
[Schatz Press Release, [3/23/20](#)]

Led A Group Of Senators Calling On President Trump To “Stop Leveling Blame” For His Response To The Pandemic And Urged Him To Invoke The Defense Production Act
[Schatz Press Release, [05/15/20](#)]

SENIOR CARE/VETERANS HOME

Called On Hawai‘i Governor David Ige To Take Additional Steps To Protect Hawai‘i Residents Living In Long-Term Care Facilities [Schatz Press Release, [05/16/20](#); [Schatz Press Release, [09/25/20](#)]

Nearly \$40 Million In New Federal Funding For 39 Hawai‘i Nursing Homes To Stay Operational During The COVID-19 Pandemic [Schatz Press Release, [05/22/20](#)]

Fought To Protect Three Hawai‘i Nursing Homes As COVID-19 Outbreaks Spread In Facilities [Schatz Press Release, [09/12/20](#)]

Helped Mobilize A Veterans Health Team And Secure Funding After Requesting Immediate Federal Intervention In Response To A COVID-19 Outbreak At A Hilo Veterans Home [Schatz Press Release, [09/06/20](#); [09/11/20](#); [09/17/21](#)]

UNEMPLOYMENT

JOBS TO FIGHT COVID-19 ACT

[Schatz Press Release, [05/21/20](#)]

TESTING/VENTILATION

Called On The Hawai‘i Department Of Education And The Hawai‘i Association Of Independent Schools (HAIS) To Adopt “Test-To-Stay” Guidance Allowing Students To Stay In School And Stop Time Away From Learning [Schatz Press Release, [12/20/21](#)]

Introduced Legislation To Ensure Free COVID-19 Tests [Free COVID-19 Testing Act, 2020; Schatz Press Release, [03/13/20](#)]

<https://www.schatz.senate.gov/news/press-releases/schatz-to-vp-pence-where-are-the-tests>

\$50 Million In New Federal Funding To Expand COVID-19 Contact Tracing And Testing [Schatz Press Release, [05/13/20](#)]

Urged Hawai‘i Education Leaders To Ensure Proper Ventilation As Schools In Hawai‘i Reopened For In-Person Learning [Schatz Press Release, [09/23/20](#)]

\$958,613 from the National Institutes of Health to increase the reach, access and uptake of COVID-19 testing among Pacific Islander communities in Hawai‘i and Guam [Schatz Press Release, [11/18/20](#)]

Fought For Hawai‘i To Maintain The Expanded COVID-19 Contract Tracing Program [Schatz Press Release, [12/01/20](#)]

VACCINES/MASKS

Joined Senators Calling On Vaccine Manufacturers To Increase COVID-19 Vaccines To Low And Middle Income Countries [Schatz Press Release, [12/21/21](#)]

Led A Bipartisan Group Of Senators Calling On President Biden To “Do More To Lead Global Efforts To End This Pandemic And Increase Global Vaccine Access.” [Schatz Press Release, [10/22/21](#)]

\$797,942 In New Funding For COVID-19 Vaccine Preparedness In Hawai‘i [Schatz Press Release, [10/05/20](#)]

Joined Senators Seeking At Least \$5.6 Billion In Federal Funding To Develop And Support COVID-19 Vaccine Infrastructure [Reed Press Release, [07/15/20](#)]

Twelve Health Centers Selected To Participate In A COVID-19 Vaccine Program Aimed At Providing Vaccines For Underserved Communities [Schatz Press Release, [03/11/21](#)]

Sought Updated Information From The CDC And TSA On Mask Guidance While Traveling For Vaccinated Individuals [Schatz Press Release, [06/27/21](#)]

THE MASKS WORK ACT OF 2020

Introduced Legislation To Provide Free Cloth Masks In An Effort To Improve Public Awareness Of The Effectiveness Of Masks To Combat COVID-19 [Schatz Press Release, [07/30/20](#)]

LEADERSHIP

Called On The Trump Administration To Immediately Fill Global Health Security Position During The Pandemic [Schatz Press Release, [02/18/20](#)]

Introduced The Schatz-Authored Scientific Integrity Act And Called On Senate Leaders To Include The Legislation In The Next Relief Package [The Scientific Integrity Act, S.775; Schatz Press Release, [04/25/20](#)]

- Fought to include Schatz-legislation following new reports of science suppression at CDC. The legislation was included in the House-passed HEROES Act. [Schatz Press Release, [05/21/20](#)]

Led A Group Of Senators In Announcing New Legislation To Create A Panel Of Independent Experts Tasked With Developing A Broad Strategy Of How And When To Safely Reopen The Country [Schatz Press Release, [04/13/20](#)]

Introduced Senate-Passed Legislation To Honor COVID-19 Victims With A Moment Of Silence In June 2020 [Schatz Press Release, [05/21/20](#); [05/27/20](#); [06/01/20](#)]

Urged The White House To Follow CDC Guidelines And Respond To Its COVID-19 Outbreak After A Report Indicating Insufficient Measures Were Taken [Schatz Press Release, [10/03/20](#)]

Successfully Called On President Trump To Extend Authorization And Funding For Hawai‘i National Guard’s COVID-19 Response Operations [Schatz Press Release, [11/25/20](#); [12/03/20](#)]

- Executive order from president biden authorized a 100 percent reimbursement rate [Schatz Press Release, [01/21/21](#)]

Successfully Called On Governor David Ige To Lift Restrictions On Youth Sporting Events While Adhering To CDC Guidelines [Schatz Press Release, [05/13/21](#); [05/17/21](#); [05/25/21](#)]

HEALTH INSURANCE

STATE PUBLIC OPTION ACT

Reintroduced Legislation To Create A Medicaid-Based Public Health Care Option [Schatz Press Release, [10/25/17](#); [02/14/19](#); State Public Option Act, [S.2001](#); State Public Option Act, [S.489](#)]

- **Maui News: “US Sen. Schatz Reintroduces Bill To Create Public Health Insurance Option”** “US Senators Brian Schatz (D-HI) and Ben Ray Luján (D-NM) today reintroduced bicameral legislation to create a Medicaid-based public health insurance option to strengthen the Affordable Care Act by providing Americans with a new high-quality, low-cost choice when purchasing health insurance. The legislation, called the State Public Option Act and cosponsored by US Sen. Mazie Hirono (D-HI), would open up each state’s Medicaid program to anyone who wants it. ‘Our ultimate goal here is to make sure that every single American has comprehensive health care coverage,’ Sen. Schatz said.” [Maui News, [08/06/21](#)]
- **Fierce Healthcare Headline: “Democrats Reintroduce Legislation To Create Medicaid-Based Public Option”** “Nearly 20 Senate Democrats reintroduced legislation Friday to create a new Medicaid-based public option, reinforcing their commitment to a key priority. But the legislation isn’t certain to become law, as it has not been added to a \$3.5 trillion infrastructure package that includes other reforms on drug pricing and expanding Medicare benefits. Nevertheless, the legislation underscores the commitment among the chamber’s Democrats to the issue that also has gotten support from President Joe Biden. ‘Our bill will open up each state’s Medicaid program to anyone who wants it, giving people a high-quality, low-cost public health insurance option,’ said Sen. Brian Schatz, D-Hawaii, one of the lead sponsors, in a statement. ‘Our ultimate goal here is to make sure that every single American has comprehensive health care coverage.’” [Fierce Healthcare, [08/06/21](#)]

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Defended The *Affordable Care Act*, Fought To Protect It, And Criticized “Trumpcare” [Schatz Press Release, [09/23/20](#); [09/18/13](#); [03/14/17](#); [05/04/17](#)]

\$1,150,468 Million For Community Health Centers To Help Provide Uninsured Individuals With Affordable Health Care Coverage Under The ACA [Schatz Press Release, [05/09/13](#)]

2013: Affordable Care Act Has Helped 15,318 Seniors In Hawaii Save A Total Of \$35,300,393 On Their Prescription Drug Costs So Far This Year [Schatz Press Release, [11/26/13](#)]

YOUTH

VAPING

Raising The Smoking And Vaping Age To 21

This legislation prohibits the sale of tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, to anyone under the age of 21. Research from the National Academy of Medicine shows that raising the minimum legal age of sale of tobacco products to 21 nationwide would reduce the number of new tobacco users, decrease smoking frequency by 12 percent, and save more than 220,000 lives from deaths related to smoking. The legislation was supported by several [organizations](#). [Schatz Press Release, [12/19/19](#); [12/16/19](#); [09/30/15](#); *Tobacco to 21 Act* [S.1258](#), *Tobacco to 21 Act*, [S.2100](#)]

- **Maui News Headline: “Tobacco To 21 Legislation Set To Become Law, Sent to White House”** “Legislation first authored by US Senator Brian Schatz (D-Hawai‘i) that will prohibit the sale of tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, to anyone under the age of 21 passed the Senate today and is expected to be signed into law by the president. ‘This is a big win for public health. Raising the minimum smoking and vaping age to 21 will protect our kids and save lives,’ said Senator Schatz.” [Maui News, [12/19/19](#)]
- **New York Times Headline: “Congress Approves Raising Age To 21 For E-Cigarette And Tobacco Sales”** “‘This is a big win for public health,’ said Senator Brian Schatz, Democrat of Hawaii, who had proposed the higher national age limit to buy tobacco in 2015 after his state adopted it. ‘Raising the minimum smoking and vaping age to 21 will protect our kids and save lives.’” [New York Times, [12/19/19](#)]
- **CNBC: “US Lawmakers Push Bipartisan Bill To Raise The Federal Minimum Buying Age For Tobacco To 21”** [CNBC, [04/30/19](#)]

Criticized The Trump Administration For Reversing Its Commitment To Remove Certain Vaping Products From The Market In A Letter Joined By 30 Senate Colleagues [Schatz Press Release, [01/13/20](#)]

Welcomed New FDA Rule Extending Its Regulatory Authority Over E-Cigarettes [Schatz Press Release, [05/05/16](#)]

PUBLIC HEALTH

ZIKA AND DENGUE

Fought For Funding The Response To Zika And Dengue In An Effort To Stop The Spread

[Schatz Press Release, [02/05/16](#); [02/09/16](#); [02/11/16](#); [03/25/16](#); [04/11/16](#); [04/18/16](#); [05/12/16](#); [05/17/16](#); [08/03/16](#); [08/04/16](#); [09/09/16](#); [09/22/16](#)]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Released A Report From The GAO Finding That More Work Is Needed From Federal Agencies To Address The Public Health Risks Of Climate Change [Schatz Press Release, [11/03/15](#)]

CHRONIC DISEASE AND HEALTHY LIVING

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services awarded \$1,092,341 to the Hawai'i State Department of Health's Healthy Hawai'i Initiative, which works to prevent chronic disease and promote healthy living in the state. [Schatz Press Release, [04/13/17](#)]

RURAL MEDICINE

Co-Introduced Legislation To Address Physician Shortages In Rural Communities And On Neighbor Islands [Schatz Press Release, [04/16/13](#); Rural Preventive Health Care Training Act (S. 726)]

Co-Introduced Legislation That Would Increase Access To High Quality Health Care In Remote Regions [Schatz Press Release, [04/28/16](#); Expanding Capacity for Health Outcomes (ECHO) Act]

Co-introduced legislation that would produce high quality data on where general surgeons are in short supply around the country [Schatz Press Release, [11/14/19](#); Ensuring Access to General Surgery Act of 2019; Ensuring Access to General Surgery Act of 2021]

announced that the Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center will receive \$472,834 in federal funding from the American Rescue Plan to establish a teaching health center primary care medical residency program on Oahu... The new residency program will help train residents at community-based sites and help to address physician workforce shortages in rural and underserved communities. [Schatz Press Release, [12/10/21](#)]

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

FUNDING

\$28,750,365 In Federal Funding Awarded To 14 Community Health Centers In Hawai‘i
[Schatz Press Release, [03/25/19](#)]

\$1,060,398 Grant For The West Hawai‘i Community Health Center Which Will Allow The Center To Help Low Income Families On Hawai‘i Island Access Quality And Comprehensive Health Care [Schatz Press Release, [11/19/19](#)]

\$1,811,639 Grant For The Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center To Help Low Income Families On Oahu Access High Quality, Comprehensive Health Care [Schatz Press Release, [12/09/20](#)]

\$741,897 In Federal Health Care Funds For The Kapi‘olani Medical Center For Women And Children [Schatz Press Release, [11/26/13](#)]

WOMEN’S HEALTH

<https://www.schatz.senate.gov/news/press-releases/senator-schatz-colleagues-to-hhs-women-should-have-full-access-to-all-fda-approved-contraception->

<https://www.schatz.senate.gov/news/press-releases/schatz-cosponsors-legislation-to-overturn-supreme-court-ruling-that-blocked-womens-access-to-health-care>

<https://www.schatz.senate.gov/news/press-releases/schatz-calls-supreme-court-ruling-blocking-womens-access-to-health-care-disappointing>

<https://www.schatz.senate.gov/news/press-releases/schatz-senators-introduce-violence-against-women-act>

“As one of his first acts in the U.S. Senate, Schatz cosponsored legislation reauthorizing the Violence against Women Act, which President Obama signed into law earlier this year. The bill made significant improvements to the law by strengthening sexual assault prevention and broadening the communities it protects.”

<https://www.schatz.senate.gov/news/press-releases/domestic-violence-action-center-to-receive-grant-to-combat-native-hawaiian-domestic-violence>

<https://www.schatz.senate.gov/news/press-releases/schatz-leads-bipartisan-legislation-to-help-domestic-violence-survivors-cut-ties-with-abusers-separate-from-shared-wireless-service-plans-that-can-be-exploited-to-stalk-control-victims>

<https://www.schatz.senate.gov/news/press-releases/schatz-helps-to-introduce-legislation-to-protect-access-to-reproductive-care->