

**ISLAND SECURITY POLICY INSTITUTE**

ispiglobal.com · ISPIGlobal@proton.me · (808) 999-0544

**COMMENTARY**

# The Hospital at the End of the Road

*Security Policy for Island Healthcare Facilities That Are Both Critical Infrastructure and Community Lifeline*

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**Author:** Warren Pulley, Founder & Executive Director

**Institution:** Island Security Policy Institute — Honolulu, Hawai'i

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**Contact:** ISPIGlobal@proton.me · (808) 999-0544 · ispiglobal.com

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**RESEARCH INDEPENDENCE STATEMENT**

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Maui Memorial Medical Center is the only trauma center on Maui. On August 8, 2023, as the Lahaina wildfire burned through the town three miles away, the hospital received 150 percent of its capacity in burn victims and trauma patients within hours, with staff who had not been able to evacuate their own families, under conditions of communication failure, supply uncertainty, and the knowledge that the next trauma center was a medivac flight to Oahu.<sup>1</sup>

**Island hospitals are not merely healthcare facilities. They are the terminus of every emergency response chain in their community — the last line of care in an environment where the next line of care is hundreds of miles away. This critical infrastructure status creates security and emergency management requirements that standard healthcare security frameworks do not adequately address.**

## The Sole Provider Security Profile

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When a continental hospital faces a security incident that disrupts operations, regional healthcare networks can divert patients, transfer cases, and redistribute capacity.<sup>2</sup> When an island hospital faces a security incident that disrupts operations, patients who cannot be treated must either go untreated or be transported by air — a capacity that is limited and expensive. This means that the threat assessment priorities for island hospitals must weight operational continuity threats differently than frameworks calibrated for hospitals with nearby backup capacity.

## ISPI Recommendations

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1. Develop island hospital security frameworks that treat operational continuity as a primary security objective — specifically addressing threats that could disrupt the only trauma center available to an island community.
2. Fund island hospital security hardening through FEMA and HHS infrastructure grants specifically designed for healthcare facilities serving as sole providers in geographically isolated communities.
3. Commission ISPI to develop island hospital security assessment protocols integrating physical security, insider threat, emergency preparedness, and supply chain continuity in a unified assessment framework.

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### NOTES AND REFERENCES

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### ABOUT THE ISLAND SECURITY POLICY INSTITUTE

The Island Security Policy Institute (ISPI) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization based in Honolulu, Hawaii. ISPI produces practitioner-led research, policy analysis, training programs, and commissioned research on public safety, emergency preparedness, insider threat, and security policy for island and coastal communities worldwide. ISPI is registered as a federal contractor on SAM.gov under NAICS 541720. Warren Pulley, Founder & Executive Director.

Website: [ispiglobal.com](http://ispiglobal.com) · Email: [ISPIGlobal@proton.me](mailto:ISPIGlobal@proton.me) · Phone: (808) 999-0544 · LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/warpul13](https://www.linkedin.com/in/warpul13)

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