

CASE STUDY:

KONA COMMUNITY HOSPITAL, KEALAKEKUA, HI

Transitioning from state designation to ACS verification at a Level III trauma center



TRAUMA CONSULTING SERVICE: Site Survey Readiness

Founded in 1914, Kona Community Hospital is a 94-bed acute care facility and Level III trauma center, home to a 24-hour emergency department serving West Hawaii. Committed to delivering accessible, comprehensive healthcare, the hospital offers a wide range of services provided by a highly trained team. Known for its long-standing tradition of quality care, Kona Community Hospital strives to provide a healing environment for all the people of Hawaii.



BACKGROUND: Kona Community Hospital, a state-designated Level III trauma center, is actively preparing for American College of Surgeons Committee on Trauma (ACS-COT) verification. In Hawaii, all Level III trauma centers must obtain ACS-COT verification by their next survey, with Kona Community Hospital's set for June 2025. To ensure readiness, the hospital is addressing key gaps in meeting ACS-COT standards and resolving critical issues within its trauma center.

- A 2021 trauma site survey by the State of Hawaii Department of Health revealed several opportunities for improvement. Although most of these issues have since been resolved, the leadership remains focused on preventing similar challenges in the future.
- With the ACS-COT verification survey set for June 2025 and the data year already in progress, the hospital focused on ensuring that performance improvement, all guidelines and protocols aligned with ACS-COT requirements.
- Program leadership requested a review of transfer delays, given the challenges of operating on an island with limited transport capabilities.
- They sought to examine whether the Trauma Medical Director (TMD) had the appropriate authority to determine participants on the call panel.

To ensure readiness, Kona Community Hospital enlisted Optimal Healthcare Advisors to assess gaps in meeting ACS-COT standards, demonstrating a proactive approach toward successful verification.

SOLUTION: To facilitate a smooth transition to ACS-COT verification, Kona Community Hospital engaged Optimal Healthcare Advisors for an extensive one-week onsite assessment.

- Key stakeholders were involved throughout the process, ensuring that every department and discipline supporting the hospital's trauma program was engaged.
- A mock survey was conducted with key hospital departments to familiarize them with the virtual survey process and set clear expectations.
- A comprehensive gap analysis was performed to review ACS-COT standards for Level III trauma centers, identifying both compliance levels and areas for improvement.
- The Trauma Quality Improvement Program (TQIP) report was analyzed to pinpoint critical areas for action plan development.
- Relevant program documents, past state reviews, and data were reviewed to identify performance gaps.
- The Performance Improvement and Patient Safety Plan (PIPS) documents, including committee minutes and the loop closure process, were reviewed to get a comprehensive understanding of the strength of the performance improvement program and areas for improvement.

RESULT: The collaboration resulted in a comprehensive report outlining a timeline and key recommendations for the next nine months, highlighting both strengths and areas for improvement within the trauma program. The report emphasized the importance of hospital-wide support and established key priorities to address critical needs. Kona Community Hospital was provided with a clear roadmap to guide them toward successful ACS verification in 2025. Support from Optimal Healthcare Advisors extends beyond the initial assessment, offering continued review and feedback on committee minutes, along with ongoing guidance to ensure effective preparation.

“ We appreciate Optimal Healthcare Advisors' assistance in ensuring Kona Community Hospital's trauma program meets the requirements for our upcoming ACS Level III trauma center verification. Their assessments identified deficiencies and weaknesses, providing action plans tailored to our facility, resources, and survey timeline. Thanks to their ongoing support, Kona Community Hospital looks forward to a successful ACS Level III survey in June 2025. ”

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