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Financially ailing Molokai Clinic to close its doors

KAUNAKAKAI — Doctors with the financially troubled Molokai Clinic have informed their patients the clinic will close by the end of April.

Dr. James Koch, one of five physicians with the clinic, yesterday said the problem "simply is we have insufficient income to continue operations." Its costs — including skyrocketing malpractice premiums — are going up while revenues have fallen, largely because a greater number of the clinic's patients have been on welfare and government payments are not sufficient to cover the actual cost of providing service to patients.

Koch and four of his colleagues met with state officials last month seeking some way to increase payments "but nobody was able to do anything for us," he said.

"The state can give \$1 million to the Molokai Hospital to keep it going, but it cannot give us \$50,000 to keep us open," he said.

For most patients, the only option may be the Molokai Hospital which has two doctors on staff and may be forced to hire another.

Honolulu Advertiser
3/25/86 A-5

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