Native Hawaiian Health and Pu’u Koholā Heiau (stone temple)

By De-Ann Carpenter, MD

In August, the 42nd annual ho’okuikahi (gathering) of community members and cultural practitioners was held to honor Ke Kulana No ‘eau o Ka Wa Kahiko, the Hawaiian traditions of the past, and to commemorate the importance of the historical site of Hawai‘i’s King Kamehameha the Great.

This year, Chaminade University’s School of Nursing Dean, twelve nursing students, three medical intern, a medical resident, a dentist and a pharmacist, accompanied Drs. Brady and Carpenter and Mona Cardejon to the event. The health care students and providers worked with two of the 1 Ola Kohala participants, Pua Lilii Dudoit and Kau ‘i Malakaua-Dr. Brady and Carpenter spoke of her present commitments to Native Hawaiian communities and health, and of the need for continued sharing between Native Hawaiian culture and healing practitioners. Dr. Ka’ohimanu AkionaDang, now in her last year at the Hilo Residency, spoke of the future, as the Big Island Kaua who will sit on the Council of chiefs for the Ho’okaukai. With her connections, ‘Ahualii will stand alongside her in the years to come.

On the last day, we drove to Pololu Valley to see where the pohaku (stones) originated, 20 miles from the heiau site. Dr. Peter Donnelly hosted our breakfast and shared his work adventures on many islands, including Kalapaua, Molokai.

Experiencing the event at Pu’u Koholēa renew and perpetuates an understanding of protocol, ancestry and perseverance of Native Hawaiian culture. It gives us great pride to share such an experience with others and foster the need for cultural awareness, healing and wellness, and an understanding among our future health care providers and Native practitioners.

Pridoc 2016 Continued

JABSON students at PRIDOC presented topics including “Using LASSI for student learning development of disadvantaged students pursuing careers in medicine: The ‘Imi Ho’ola Postbaccalaureate Program” by Yuho Ono and Amanda Mesa; “Native Hawaiian Cultural Competency Training at JABSON: Senior Students Reflections” and “Privilege as a Social Determinant of Health in Medical Education: A Single Class Session Can Change Privilege Perspective” by Nash Witten, and “Meeting the health workforce needs of the underserved by training physicians at community health centers” by Nicole Mahenalani Lum.

Students returned from the conference inspired and proud to have been witness to honors bestowed on Native Hawaiian physicians prominent in Hawai‘i’s medical community; Dr. Emmett Aluli received the Kiakahi award, and a posthumous award was paid to the esteemed Dr. Kekuni Blaisdell. Following the footsteps of the honored Native Hawaiian physicians may seem like a daunting path to take, but we are all reminded that the path they trod made it easier for those to follow; no longer forced to blaze the trail themselves, students have a well-worn path forged by those who came before.

Editor/Writer: Malia Lee, MD, Lisa Kahikina, MD and Kimberly Yamauchi, MPA
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Nū ‘Oli o NHCOE is a newsletter of NHCOE at the John A. Burns School of Medicine. Opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of JABSON or of the University of Hawai‘i. Suggestions and submissions are welcome. Please submit to nhcoe@hawaii.edu - Malahi  

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Nū ‘Oli o NHCOE
Department of Native Hawaiian Health

The Voice for Those Unheard

On January 9th, 2017, JABSON medical students and faculty joined a nationwide silent protest in support of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and Planned Parenthood that appears to be threatened by our current administration. 20 million Americans including 54,000 Hawai‘i patients risk the sudden dissolution of health insurance coverage through the ACA if a suitable replacement is not offered. Physicians will once again be challenged to meet the needs of patients with limited resources. JABSON students Arelitia Imasa (MS3), Emily Jones (MS2) and Tru Dang (MS1), in their roles as Partnership for Social Justice coordinators, organized JABSON students to support the nationwide #ProtectOurPatients movement prompting healthcare providers to advocate against the repeal of the ACA. We applaud the fortitude of our students who are standing up for patient rights even before patient care becomes their sole responsibility.

As NHCOE advocates to reduce health disparities and support our future healthcare providers, Sacha Kaulukukui, NHCOE Student Development Coordinator; and Dr. Malia Lee attended the NAMME (National Association for Minority Medical Educators) conference this past September. At NAMME, they were fortunate to have met the esteemed Dr. Vivian Pinn, a graduate of the University of Virginia School of Medicine in 1967 and the only woman and African American in her class. Dr. Pinn has countless career accomplishments and is most well known for her work at NIH as the first director of the Office of Research on Women’s Health. A strong supporter of women in medical and science careers, Dr. Pinn spent twenty years as a federal policymaker to raise awareness of women’s health issues and underrepresentation in science and medicine worldwide, across educational, political and cultural communities. NHCOE’s special tie to Dr. Pinn is through our former director, Dr. Ben Young. Together, with Beverly Williams, Esq. of University of Pennsylvania, the three were leaders in the formation of the National Council on Diversity and Health Professions (NCDHP) 30 plus years ago. NCDHP is a collective group of Centers of Excellence across the US unifying to advance the underrepresented in healthcare. Dr. Pinn was a strong advocate for diversity in healthcare especially for women’s health. She continues to be an icon for those who struggle to bring the need for minorities in health professions to the forefront.

JABSON student initiatives towards supporting advocacy follow in the footsteps of the leaders, icons, and mentors who continue to guide us. Imagine a day when diversity in healthcare, education, and politics are no longer an issue, where patient resources and access to health care are equal, and every physician, educator, and politician has the courage and tenacity to hear and be the voice for those unheard.

JABSON medical students support #ProtectOurPatients

"A‘ohe pau ka ‘ike i ka halau ho‘okahi."
All knowledge is not learned in just one school

January 2017
For Our Native Hawaiian Students

Planning a summer research project? Talk to us about any plans for summer research activities and rural research opportunities on neighbor islands. NHCOE can also kokua with USMLE preparation.

Please contact NHCOE Student Development Coordinator, Sachi Kaulukukui for details: sachi@hawaii.edu

Shaping the Shadows of the Aspiring Doctor’s of Hilo

By Lisa Kahikina, MD and Kim Yamashita, MPA

Neighbor Island students are an important aspect of NHCOE’s pipeline efforts to increase diversity in the healthcare workforce. Many Hilo physicians are nearing retirement, and the need for rural physicians continues to rise. Rural and disadvantaged students are more likely to return to serve their communities, as evident from data from graduates of the ‘Imi Ho‘ola (IH) program post-baccalaureate; eighty percent (80%) of IH alumni provide primary care services and work in underserved communities, demonstrating that supporting pipeline programs and outreach to rural students is a worthwhile endeavor. More than 50% of Hilo’s pre-medical students come from a rural background, with more than 70% of the students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds.

On September 17, 2016, Dr. Lisa Kahikina, NHCOE Assistant Director, and Kimberly Yamauchi, IH Program Assistant, arrived on a 5:30AM flight to Hilo, Hawai‘i energized with the purpose and passion to provide workshops for the Aspiring Doctors of Hilo, including: (1) What to Expect During Your Shadowing Experience, (2) Pre-Health Professionalism, and (3) Understanding the The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). The workshops were designed to equip pre-medical students with skills and knowledge deemed important by physicians for a clinical shadowing. The students received certificates of completion to improve their desirability when requesting shadowing opportunities, and were encouraged to create résumés and personal statements. They were also given opportunities to engage in clinical shadowing experiences with community physicians in Hilo. At the end of the workshops, partnering community physicians enjoyed a “talk-story” session with the students, sharing their pathway stories, providing advice, and mentoring. We are especially thankful that Drs. Ka‘ohi Dang-Akiona, Darrett Choy, & Michelle Mitchell were able to join us. While devouring ‘ono local foods, such as katsu and meat-jun, the Hilo physicians shared a common theme important for many of in state students to hear: there is more than one pathway to medicine, and each path creates a unique physician. At closing, the students were reluctant to end their time with the physicians, but were reassured that their time together was merely a pause in a continuing story, as the students progress in their own pathway to medicine in rural Hawai‘i.

NHCOE Helps Lāna‘i High and Elementary School to Grow Their Own Healers

By Kimberly Yamauchi, MPA and Malia Lee, MD

As the smallest inhabited island of the Hawaiian island chain, Lāna‘i faces challenges due to its rural location and limited resources, however, the strength of its students interested in health professions emerged during a recent NHCOE recruitment visit this past November. Dr. Sasha Fernandez, Kim Yamauchi, and Rodrigo Pascual flew to Lāna‘i on November 1, 2016 to participate in the Lāna‘i Elementary School STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) Palana for Pre-K through 8th graders. While there, the team spoke with students and their families about health careers, taught students how to listen to their heart and lung sounds, and engaged in a game of Health Career Family Feud. As the evening progressed, our group spent time learning of the island’s medical community with family doctor, John Janikowski, the only full-time physician who lives on the island. In the evening, the clean Lāna‘i air cooled us from the heat of the day and the fragrant smell of food from the community hosted potluck wafted through the air.

A Career Fair was held the following day at the Lāna‘i High and Elementary School. Students from 6th through 12th grade visited over 40 tables to learn about various careers and higher education opportunities available in Hawai‘i. 180 students visited with our team to learn about medical and other health career options available in our state.

Hawai‘i is “Talking about Transformations” at PRIDoC 2016

by Malia Lee, MD

The biannual Pacific Region Indigenous Doctors’ Congress (PRIDoC) was started in Hawai‘i in 2002. It has since been hosted by indigenous physician associations across the Pacific including Australia, Taiwan, New Zealand, and Canada. PRIDoC is an international conference that brings together physicians, students and health professionals interested in improving health outcomes for indigenous people, and encourages discussions on educational and research efforts aimed at forwarding this cause. JABSOM Students, DNHH and NHCOE faculty, and the Association of Native Hawaiian Physicians of O‘ahu, Kaua‘i, and Hawai‘i, accepted the invitation to speak at the 2016 PRIDoC conference in Auckland New Zealand "Talking about Transformations."


A photo from Aspiring Doctors of Hilo

For Our Native Hawaiian Students