Native Hawaiian Health and Pu'u Koholā Heiau (stone temple)
By Dee-Ann Carpenter, MD

In August, the 42nd annual ho'okuikahi (gathering) of community members and cultural practitioners was held to honor Ke Kulana No'ou'ou o Ka Wu Kahiho, 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 students, an internal medicine resident, a dentist and a pharmacist, accompanied Drs. Brady and Carpenter and Moana Cardeleto to the event. The health care students and providers worked with two of the I Ola Kohala participants, Pua Liloa Dudoit and Kau'i Malakaua-Branco, to bring their healing energy to the event. Ninety kupuna (elders) received health screenings on the first day and the following days were spent providing first aid while observing and participating in the various ceremonial and cultural affairs.

At the closing awha ceremony, the doctors were wholehearted acknowledged starting with the Kahuna Nui, Kapono'ai (Kumu Luke's son). Dr. Brady spoke the story of when Kumu Luke first invited 'Ahau o na Kaua to Ho'okuikahi at Pu'u Kohola and Dr. 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'ohunanakia Akiona(Dang), 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'okuikahi. With her connections, 'Ahau 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 Kalapapa, Molokai.

Experiencing the event at Pu'u Koholā renews 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 fosters the need for cultural awareness, healing and wellness, and an understanding among our future health care providers and Native Hawaiian practitioners.

Pridoc 2016 Continued

JABSOM 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 Yuhu Ono and Amanda Mesa;  "Native Hawaiian Cultural Competency Training at JABSOM: Senior Students Reflections and Privilege as a Social Determinant of Health in Medical Education: A Single Class Session Can Change Privilege Perspective" by Natasha Witten, and "Meeting the health workforce needs of the underserved by training physicians at community health centers" by Nicole Mahealani Lani.

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 Ka'akahi award, and a posthumous tribute was paid to the esteemed Dr. Kekuni Blaisdell. Following the footsteps of these 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 behind to follow; no longer forced to blaze the trail themselves, students have a well-worn path forged by those who came before.

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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 to Lāna‘i Elementary School on November 1, 2016 to participate in the Lāna‘i Elementary School STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) Fair. 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 event progressed, our group spent time learning from the island’s medical community with family doctor, John Jankowski, the only full-time physician who lives on the island. In the evening, the cleaned 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 gym. Students from 6th through 12th grade visited over 40 tables to learn about various careers and higher education opportunities available in Lāna‘i. 180 students visited with our team to learn about medical and other health career options available in our state.

Dr. Sasha Fernandes demonstrates stethoscope use for elementary students at the STEM Fair on Lāna‘i on 11/1/16.

photo by Dee-Ann Carpenter, MD

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 kouka with USMLE preparation.

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

Hawaii 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 Induding 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. IABOM Students, DNIH and NHCOE faculty, and the Association of Native Hawaiian Physicians, ‘Ahahui O Nā Kauka, accepted the invitation to speak at the 2016 PRIDoC conference in Auckland New Zealand “Talking about Transformations”.

DNHI and NHCOE faculty presentations included “Utilizing Cultural Practice for Hypertension” by Mele Look, “Patient Provider Collaboration and Glycemic Control in a Multi-Ethnic Diabetic Population” and “A Randomized Control Trial to Improve Heart Failure Outcomes in Native Hawaiians & Pacific Islanders; The Malama Pu’u’wai Study” by Dr. Marjorie Mau, “Teaching Culture in an Ambulatory Setting and Pharmacy” by Dee-Ann Carpenter, and “The Power of Indigenous Art to Re-imagine, and Better Understand Cultural Trauma in a Medical Curriculum” by Martina Kamaka.

NHCOE began its relationship with Lāna‘i in April 2016 when Dr. David Sing, former Nā Pua No’eau Executive Director, introduced us to School principal, Elton Kinoshita and the Kahua Ho‘ola Native Hawaiian Center of Excellence, and the Department of Native Hawaiian Health members gathered for the kane mewa healthcare program honoring Dr. Kekuni Blaisdell.

Ahahui O Nā Kauka, Native Hawaiian Center of Excellence, and the Department of Native Hawaiian Health members met at the Kahua Ho‘ola Native Hawaiian Center of Excellence, and the Department of Native Hawaiian Health members gathered for the kane mawe kaukau for the memoir of honor of Dr. Kekuni Blaisdell.

photo by Dee-Ann Carpenter, MD

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Shaping the Shadows of the Aspiring Doctor’s of Hilo
By Lisa Kahikina, MD and Kim Yamauchi, 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 ‘Ilima 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 physicians 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.

An important element of a successful medical school application is having a clinical shadowing experience. According to AAMC (Association of American Medical Colleges) Matriculating Student Questionnaire (MSQ) for the past 5 years, 80% of successfully matriculating medical students had a clinical shadowing experience. Advisors to the Aspiring Doctors of Hilo club, a pre-medical student club at the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo, identified a need for clinical shadowing opportunities for their students. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds have found gaining clinical experiences difficult to obtain without personal connections or networks. The need to address these barriers to shadowing prompted the NHCOE to deliver clinical shadowing workshops and assist with shadowing opportunities for these students.

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 resumes 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 these 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.