



MEDICAL SCHOOL HOTLINE

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Promoting Diversity of the Health Care Workforce

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Increasing the diversity of the health care workforce and developing physicians who serve underprivileged and rural communities are vital to meet the demands of the changing US patient population. Educational institutional efforts to locate, encourage, and support capable students from diverse backgrounds and cultures who are willing and able to pursue careers in medicine and other health professions are sorely needed.¹ The US Census Bureau predicts that the US population's racial and ethnic diversity will continue to rise. By 2050, minorities (those who identify themselves as Hispanic, Black, Asian, American Indian, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander or mixed race) will account for 54% of the US population.²

In 2009, the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) received \$3,024,772 over 3 years of funding for the Native Hawaiian Center of Excellence (NHCOE) from the US Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Bureau of Health Professions. Established more than 15 years ago, NHCOE is a part of the University of Hawai'i's Department of Native Hawaiian Health (DNHH). The Centers of Excellence Program provides grants to health professional schools to support educational programs for underrepresented minority students.

NHCOE Mission

The mission of the Native Hawaiian Center of Excellence is to promote the physical and mental health of all Native Hawaiians by recruiting students for the health professions, developing competitive Native Hawaiian applicants, conducting health disparities research, promoting faculty and student development, initiating cultural competence development, and disseminating information.

To successfully carry out its mission, the NHCOE has an Affiliation Agreement with educational and community partners to carry out activities that strengthen the educational pipeline for underrepresented minority students, particularly Native Hawaiians, to enter health professional schools. The partners are 'Ahaui O Na Kauka - Association of Native Hawaiian Physicians, Papa Ola Lokahi - Native Hawaiian Health Organization & Native Hawaiian Scholarship Program, Kīpuka Native Hawaiian Student Center at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, Office of Student Equity, Excellence and Diversity and Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

The NHCOE activities will focus on 8 areas of education and training: 1) Student Recruitment; 2) Competitive Applicant Pool; 3) Student Performance; 4) Faculty Development; 5) Faculty/Student Research; 6) Student Training in Community-Based Facilities; 7) Information Dissemination; 8) Cultural Competence Development.

Student Recruitment

NHCOE will be expanding and strengthening student recruitment by partnering with JABSOM's Area Health Education Center (AHEC) and the UH Mānoa Native Hawaiian Student Services, Kokua A Puni. Interested high school and college students will be introduced to the health professions during student recruitment visits on O'ahu,

Hawai'i island, Maui, Moloka'i, and Kaua'i. At least thirty visits to Hawai'i's high schools and colleges are planned for each year of the grant.

Competitive Applicant Pool

Preparatory workshops to improve Native Hawaiian students' competitiveness for medical school admission will be offered. The "Native Hawaiian Student Pathway to Medicine" will be available to Native Hawaiian junior and senior undergraduate students, as well as to post-baccalaureate students, seeking admission to JABSOM. The preparatory program will consist of workshops on interviewing skills, time management, learning skills, and assistance with medical school application. The Kaplan Medical Review, a comprehensive preparation for the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) will be conducted for each student. Up to 20 students will participate in the program offered on both the UH Mānoa and UH Hilo campuses. The "Native Hawaiian Student Pathway to Social Work" is also available to support the University of Hawai'i's Myron B. Thompson's School of Social Work to continue their diversity initiatives in preparing Native Hawaiian students for advanced degrees in Social Work.

Student Performance

The NHCOE will establish, strengthen, and expand programs to enhance the academic performance of Native Hawaiian medical students at JABSOM beginning in the first year of medical school. Native Hawaiian students will be offered enrichment and retention support through multidisciplinary Student Development Teams. NHCOE will partner with 'Ahaui O Na Kauka to build mentoring relationships currently being provided to Imi Ho'ola Post-Baccalaureate Program alumni and to expand this program to all Native Hawaiian medical students. Students will be paired with a community physician who will provide mentoring, guidance, and support as well as shadowing opportunities. NHCOE will also provide Native Hawaiian second-year students with financial support to purchase study materials for United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) Step 1 preparation.

Faculty Development

The NHCOE will provide trainings in research and leadership skills for Native Hawaiian JABSOM academic faculty by offering a Fellowship Training Program to doctoral level Native Hawaiians interested in areas of health disparities research. The objective of the NHCOE Fellowship Training Program is to increase the number of Native Hawaiian faculty at JABSOM by producing highly trained faculty candidates through the NHCOE fellowship pipeline. This two-year fellowship will be available to Native Hawaiian MDs or PhDs who are interested in developing their skills as an academic educator. Fellows will be mentored in developing and conducting a health disparities research project. The curriculum will include research proposal development, coursework in biostatistics, grant writing assistance, and presentation/publication support. Fellows will also participate in the Office of Medical Education (OME) Fellowship as part of their training. Fellows will receive a stipend

and are required to commit to 40% Full-time Equivalent (FTE) for the duration of the program.

Faculty/Student Research

The NHCOE Health Disparities Research Training Program will be composed of three educational tiers: undergraduates, medical students, and post-graduate fellows. Over the next three years, the NHCOE will establish a research training pipeline that will recruit and provide research training on Native Hawaiian health issues to at least 6 undergraduate students, at least 6 first-year medical students and at least 4 Native Hawaiian fellows. The Summer Research Internship (SRI) program, sponsored by the Department of Native Hawaiian Health, will be available to undergraduate students interested in the medical field and health related research. NHCOE will support 2 Native Hawaiian students in the SRI program by providing stipends for program participation. The “Native Hawaiian Health: Past, Present, Future,” first-year course will be offered to first-year medical students as part of the JABSOM Community Health and Service program. Students will be introduced to Native Hawaiian health disparities, basic research methodology, and Native Hawaiian traditional healing methods. The NHCOE’s research training fellowship program, established in 1999, has contributed to the recruitment and retention of 10 Native Hawaiian physicians who have joined the ranks of JABSOM faculty.

Student Training in Community-Based Facilities

Each JABSOM medical student will receive part of his/her clinical training at community-based facilities, many of which are designated as Health Professions Shortage Areas (e.g. Hilo Medical Center, Waimanalo Health Center). At each rural site, a community physician will serve as a preceptor and mentor to the medical students. This experience allows students to discover the unique attributes of each facility, the major medical and social challenges faced within rural communities, and the community’s response to the health needs of Native Hawaiians. Students will work with traditional Native Hawaiian healers in caring for their patients at select sites. NHCOE will coordinate the placement of at least 10 JABSOM medical students into community-based health facilities that serve a significant number of Native Hawaiians. NHCOE will support the travel and lodging of up to 3 Native Hawaiian medical students placed at neighbor island sites.

Lau Ola is the clinical practice of the Department of Native Hawaiian Health which primarily serves Native Hawaiian patients. Over 60% of the clinic’s patient population is Native Hawaiian. The clinic is staffed by Native Hawaiian physicians (Drs. S. Kalani Brady, Dee-Ann Carpenter, and Marjorie Mau) as well as Native Hawaiian support personnel (Geri Kaleponi, medical assistant). During the clinical rotations in the first and third year, medical students will be offered the opportunity to shadow the physicians at Lau Ola. Students will develop their clinical and communication skills while caring for Native Hawaiian patients. As part of the third-year experience, medical students will provide community service to Papakolea, a Native Hawaiian community in urban Honolulu. Students spend one evening a week assisting the clinic physicians with blood pressure screening for individuals, many of whom are Native Hawaiian, who are receiving lomilomi (traditional Hawaiian massage) in the Papakolea community.

Information Dissemination

The NHCOE will publish and disseminate information resources related to health disparities to improve the knowledge and awareness of medical students, NHCOE fellows, JABSOM faculty, community

physicians, nurses, and other allied health professionals. Each year, the project plans to publish and/or disseminate at least two publications or resources that focus on Native Hawaiian health issues or promote the activities of the NHCOE. In 2010, the NHCOE will partner with the Department of Native Hawaiian Health and the Center for Native and Pacific Health Disparities Research to hold the He Huliau 2010 Conference entitled “Metabolic Syndrome and Health Equity.” NHCOE will also be sponsoring the publication of the He Huliau 2010 Conference Proceedings as a special issue of the Hawai‘i Medical Journal.

Cultural Competence Development

Recognition of Native Hawaiian culture and traditions and its significance in improving the health of our Native Hawaiians is vital. Therefore, cultural competence development will be embedded throughout the activities of the NHCOE. Native Hawaiians view spirituality and harmony as contributing factors to their health and well-being. The incorporation of cultural strengths and viewpoints into western healing practices is helpful as physicians work in partnership with Native Hawaiian patients in promoting health and treating disease.

JABSOM’s medical school curriculum promotes medical students’ cultural competence development. Through problem-based learning (PBL), medical students use patient paper cases to generate self-directed student learning in small groups. Students will be introduced to the populational, psychosocial, scientific, clinical, and cultural factors that impact the health of Native Hawaiians during PBL sessions. Lectures on Native Hawaiian health, traditional healing practice demonstrations, and social justice in medicine are components of the cultural competency curriculum. A cultural immersion learning experience that focuses on Native Hawaiian health and culture will be offered to first-year medical students. By “living” in a culture, students gain the knowledge to develop cultural sensitivity to the Native Hawaiian people that may impact their interactions with future patients. Standardized patients are used regularly as an objective way to evaluate medical student knowledge, skills and behaviors. A culturally based Native Hawaiian standardized patient case will be designed and tested on 6 third-year JABSOM students rotating through Family Medicine. This novel approach will be used to evaluate the cultural competence development of our physicians in training.

Conclusion

The NHCOE will provide services that maximize the potential of Native Hawaiians to pursue and achieve a successful career in medicine and other health professions. The integration of cultural competence development into key aspects of JABSOM curricula enhances the education of all future physicians. NHCOE activities seek to promote health care workforce diversity and improve the health of Native Hawaiians.

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