



# NŪ 'OLI O NHCOE

Department of Native Hawaiian Health  
John A. Burns School of Medicine



2024  
Edition

Aloha mai kākou,

It is an honor to serve as the new director of the Native Hawaiian Center of Excellence (NHCOE) and to continue the vital work of uplifting the health and well-being of our communities throughout Hawai'i. Growing up in Ka'elepulu (Enchanted Lakes, Kailua) and currently living in Waimānalo, I have learned the importance of strong, connected communities and the value of care rooted in cultural understanding. These lessons inspire my commitment to expanding opportunities for Native Hawaiians in medicine and health-related fields, fostering culturally informed and community-centered healthcare, and strengthening partnerships with local public and private organizations that play a vital role in improving the health of Hawai'i's people.

Looking ahead, NHCOE will focus on building a robust pathway for Native Hawaiians entering the health professions by strengthening and launching new programs, expanding opportunities for youth, and collaborating on research to address health disparities. Our larger vision is to inspire, mentor, and support the next generation of healthcare professionals while tackling systemic inequities in health. These efforts align with our commitment to increasing the number of Native Hawaiian physicians practicing in Hawai'i and advancing health equity for our communities.

I want to mahalo the NHCOE team, the Department of Native Hawaiian Health, and our many community partners for their unwavering dedication to this mission. Our collective mana is what drives us forward. I warmly invite you to join us on this journey—whether through mentorship, community outreach, or partnership opportunities, your support is integral to creating a healthier future for Hawai'i. Please feel free to reach out to share your thoughts, ideas, or questions; together, we can thrive through collaboration and shared vision.

Me ka 'o ia i'ō nō,

Dr. K. Kanoho Hosoda



**Full Name:** Kelsea Kanohokuahiwi Hosoda  
**Preferred Name(s):** Kanoho, Dr. Hosoda, Kumu Kanoho  
**Hometown:** Ka'elepulu (Enchanted Lakes, Kailua), O'ahu  
**College:** Bachelors, Masters, and Doctorate at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (Go Bows!), Postdoctoral fellowship at UCSF  
**Proudest Achievement:** Finishing my PhD with three kids  
**Hobbies Outside Work:** Mom Life, Soccer, Camping  
**Future Goal:** Develop a strong network of Native Hawaiian healthcare practitioners to address the health issues amongst our Native Hawaiian communities.  
**Fun Fact:** I was a part of the first NHCOE Native Hawaiian Student Pathway to Medicine Cohort



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## Our Impact

**75**  
Recruitment  
Events

**5**  
NH program  
participants  
accepted into  
JABSOM

**33**  
Medical  
Students  
supported

**100%**  
of JABSOM  
Medical Students  
trained

**500**  
Keiki and 'Ōpio  
inspired

**39**  
Pre-Medical  
students  
supported

**6**  
NH students  
graduated from  
JABSOM

In 2024, the Native Hawaiian Center of Excellence...

- Over 500 keiki and 'ōpio were inspired to explore medicine and other healthcare professions through 75 recruitment events.
- Developed 39 Native Hawaiian premedical students to become competitive applicants for health professions schools, with 5 students being accepted this application year. Continued mentorship of 34 students pursuing healthcare fields including attendance at other medical schools, research positions, and as clinical technicians.
- Supported 33 Native Hawaiian medical students at JABSOM, of which 6 successfully graduated with their medical doctorate. Currently supporting 29 Native Hawaiian medical students at JABSOM.
- Trained 100% of JABSOM medical students on the significance of Native Hawaiian values, cultural humility, and medical professionalism.

## Queen's Health Systems Contract

The Native Hawaiian Center of Excellence is excited to announce our new partnership with the Queen's Health Systems. Through the *Growing Our Native Hawaiian Physician Workforce* project the Queen's Health Systems is providing NHCOE funding to inspire keiki and 'ōpio to pursue health careers, develop Native Hawaiian premedical students, and mentor Native Hawaiian medical students and physicians to provide the best support for the health needs of our Native Hawaiian communities throughout Hawaii.

With this new opportunity, we are expanding our programming provided to Native Hawaiian pre-medical students who are actively applying for the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM). Pre-medical students will receive individualized learning support to understand their learning style and how to best achieve on the medical college admissions test (MCAT), culturally tailored mentorship from Native Hawaiian medical students, residents, and practicing physicians.



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## Student Highlights



*Kiara Moffitt, MS1*

**Name:** Kiara Moffitt  
**Hometown:** Honolulu, HI  
**Year in Medical School:** MS1  
**Favorite Specialty Interest:** Geriatrics  
**Proudest Achievement:** Graduate of the Imi Ho'ola Post-Baccalaureate Program  
**Go-To Study Snack:** Matcha and strawberries  
**Hobbies Outside Medicine:** Painting and hiking  
**Future Goal:** Establish and manage a nursing home that provides compassionate care to older adults, prioritizing quality of life through patient-centered care while fostering dignity and independence.  
**Fun Fact:** I can lick my elbow



*Kennedy-Kainoa Zeni Tamashiro, MS2*

**Name:** Kennedy-Kainoa Zeni Tamashiro  
**Hometown:** Wailuku, HI  
**Year in Medical School:** MS2  
**Favorite Specialty Interest:** I am unsure, but I'm currently exploring the internal medicine subspecialties.  
**Proudest Achievement:** I had the opportunity to spend the summer in Palau and learn a little about their culture, health system, and the challenges of rural medicine.  
**Go-To Study Snack:** Apples and peanut butter.  
**Hobbies Outside Medicine:** Going to the beach with family and friends, watching Netflix, playing games and puzzles, and doing crafts.  
**Future Goal:** To be able to return home and work with underserved populations.  
**Fun Fact:** My favorite food is miso soup with rice.



*Keli'i Shontell, MS2*

**Name:** Ryan Hiroshi Keli'i Shontell  
**Hometown:** Kohala, HI  
**Year in Medical School:** MS2  
**Favorite Specialty Interest:** Hematology/Oncology  
**Proudest Achievement:** Became the first Hawaiian in my family to receive a PhD  
**Go-To Study Snack:** Black coffee and popcorn  
**Hobbies Outside Medicine:** Surfing and playing video games with my brothers  
**Future Goal:** To continue contributing to the health of our lāhui through the delivery of high-quality cancer care and research in Hawai'i  
**Fun Fact:** I buy wedges of cheddar cheese from Costco to nibble on as snacks.



*Ashley Mainani Lee, MS4*

**Name:** Ashley Mainani Lee  
**Hometown:** He'eia, O'ahu  
**Year in Medical School:** MS4  
**Specialty:** Applying OB/GYN!  
**Proudest Achievement:** United States Public Health Service 2024 Excellence in Public Health Award for my work with the Maui Wildfires  
**Go-To Study Snack:** li hing mui sour belts  
**Hobbies Outside of Medicine:** aloha 'āina work (lo'i kalo, māla), ku'uai, cooking/baking, watching reality TV  
**Future Goal:** Bring us closer to restoring the health of our lāhui  
**Fun Fact:** When my mom was in labor with me, my dad saw the epidural needle going into my mom, fainted and missed my birth. So my aunty cut my umbilical cord!



*Janette Makalapua Bow-Keola MS2*

**Name:** Janette Makalapua Bow-Keola  
**Hometown:** Honolulu, HI  
**Year in Medical School:** MS2  
**Favorite Specialty Interest:** Neurosurgery  
**Proudest Achievement:** Completed the 'Imi Ho'ola Post-Baccalaureate Program  
**Go-To Study Snack:** Celsius energy drinks  
**Hobbies Outside Medicine:** Theater, Barre, Hot Yoga, Creative writing  
**Future Goal:** Become a national-level advocate for minorities underrepresented in medicine  
**Fun Fact:** Has visited all 50 states



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## Ho'omaika'i Dr. Martina Kamaka



*Dr. Martina Kamaka*

Congratulations to Dr. Martina Kamaka for obtaining a promotion to Full Professor with the Department of Native Hawaiian Health. Dr. Kamaka has led the Cultural Competency Curriculum efforts at the John A. Burns School of Medicine, teaching hundreds of medical students and practicing physicians the importance of culture and health in patient interactions and connection to Native Hawaiian communities.

Many of her JABSOM efforts feature experiential learning that connects students to 'āina and community-based organizations through service learning. In addition to her teaching efforts at JABSOM, she is involved in other efforts to improve the health of our communities. She is a recent Climate and Health Equity Fellowship graduate, Vice-Chair for the National Council for Asian Pacific Islander Physicians, DEI commissioner for the American Academy of Family Physicians and long time member, and founder of both the Pacific Region Indigenous Doctors Congress and the 'Ahahui o nā Kauka (Association of Native Hawaiian Physicians).

### Stay Connected



<https://tinyurl.com/ycke43cr>

The Native Hawaiian Center of Excellence offers mentorship to Native Hawaiians at every stage of their journey to becoming a physician, from middle school students to practicing professionals.

If you or someone you know is interested in being a part of our opportunities as a future medical school applicant, medical student, or physician mentor, please fill out the interest form found at the QR code or the link.

### Mahalo to Our Sponsors



THE HAWAII PACIFIC FOUNDATION



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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 JABSOM or of the University of Hawai'i. Suggestions and submissions are welcome.  
Please submit to [nhcoe@hawaii.edu](mailto:nhcoe@hawaii.edu)

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