

Neal A. Palafox, Panelist

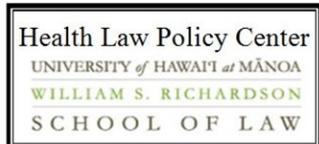
Neal A. Palafox, MD, MPH is presently Professor and former Chair of the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health at the John A. Burns School of Medicine, University of Hawai'i. He received his medical degree from the University of Hawai'i, completed his residency at the UCLA Health Center for Clinical Sciences and obtained his MPH from Johns Hopkins University. Currently he serves as Chair for Hawai'i's Cancer Coalition. From 1983 to 1992, Dr.

Palafox worked in the Marshall Islands (RMI) as a physician and medical director of a U.S. funded program to care for the radiation affected people of RMI. Between 1997 and 2009, he was the Principal Investigator for a Congressionally-mandated program to provide medical care for Marshall Islanders who were exposed to fallout from the Bravo hydrogen bomb detonation in RMI.

The last 25 years of his career has focused on reducing health disparities in the populations of Hawai'i and the U.S. Affiliated Pacific Island (USAPI) Jurisdictions of the Territories of American Samoa, Guam, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Republic of Palau. This work has been done through health workforce development, affecting health policy regarding standards of care, systems based development utilizing a community-based, participatory approach and developing key partnerships with health leadership and policymakers. These efforts have resulted in each of the USAPI jurisdictions and the USAPI Region in receiving CDC funds for their cancer programs and registry.

Dr. Palafox has served as the Principal Investigator of CDC supported Pacific Center of Excellence in the Elimination of Disparities, Pacific Regional Central Cancer Registry, U54 NCI Partnership Grant, and a P20 disparity grant for Pacific Peoples. He has published numerous articles in the areas of health disparities in the USAPI, health consequences of nuclear testing in the Pacific, Pacific Regional Cancer Networks development, social determinants of health, vitamin A deficiency, and cultural competency.

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STORIES FROM THE HEART

Please join us as we reflect upon experiences from the Micronesian community as Hawai'i moves towards health coverage for all.

With Panelists

Sheldon Riklon, MD

Megan Inada Hagiwara, MPH

Neal A. Palafox, MD, MPH

Moderated by

Joakim "Jojo" Peter, MA

Program

5:00 pm

Networking & Refreshments

5:20 pm

Panel Discussion

6:30 pm

Questions & Answers

Thank you for attending. If you would like to know more about these issues, please visit www.healthypacific.org



Joakim Peter, Moderator

Joakim “Jojo” Peter, MA is a doctoral student in the Special Education program at the College of Education, Univ. of Hawai‘i at Mānoa (UHM) and community advocate for COFA Community Advocacy Network (COFACAN), Micronesian Health Advisory Coalition (MHAC), and We Are Oceania (WAO). He is from Chuuk in the Federated States of Micronesia and attended Xavier High School. He has two Master degrees UHM in Pacific Islands Studies and History. He served as director of the College of Micronesia-FSM Chuuk Campus for 15 years before returning to UHM to pursue his doctorate, which focuses on immigrant families of children with special needs in Hawai‘i.

In 2011, Jojo and fellow community advocates founded COFA CAN, a community advocacy network that provides awareness and support for crucial legislative and legal initiatives that affect the lives of the Freely Associated States citizens living in Hawai‘i and the United States. Jojo has lectured at UHM and Kapi‘olani Community College. In 2012 and 2014, Jojo worked with the Department of Ethnic Studies and the Center for Pacific Islands Studies to organize two symposia - “Micronesian Connections” and “Oceanic Connections” - that sought to bring together community members, educators, and students to develop strategies for empowerment and sharing among Oceanic peoples. Recently, the Micronesian groups have been conducting outreach to collect stories of healthcare issues and challenges among the COFA populations in Hawai‘i.

Sheldon Riklon, Panelist

Sheldon Riklon, MD, is a Marshallese family physician, born and raised in the Marshall Islands. He is one of only two Marshallese in the world who has completed medical school and residency training at a U.S. accredited program. After high school graduation, he moved to Hawai‘i where he received his BA in Biology from UH-Hilo in 1989. He completed the Imi Ho‘ola Post Graduate Program at the UHM and matriculated through the John A. Burns School of Medicine where he received his MD in 1998. Upon completion of his family medicine residency training in 2001, he returned home to the Marshall Islands where, among other duties, he served as a primary care physician at Majuro Hospital, chaired the national medical referral committee, chaired Majuro Hospital’s Pharmacy and Therapeutics committee, was a member of the institutional review committee, and directed the Special Medical Care Program that provided healthcare to the radiation affected population in the Marshall Islands.



...Riklon’s bio continued on next page.

... Riklon, continued from previous page

In 2009, he returned to Hawai‘i and is a faculty member with JABSOM’s Department of Family Medicine and Community Health serving as the Family Medicine Clerkship Director. Dr. Riklon continues to be actively involved among the Marshallese and the other Micronesian populations in Hawai‘i as one of the founding members and current chair of the Micronesian Health Advisory Coalition.

Megan Inada Hagiwara, Panelist

Megan Kiyomi Inada Hagiwara, MPH

graduated from the University of Hawai‘i with a Masters in Public Health, Epidemiology in 2005. Shortly after graduating, she worked on a bioterrorism and natural disaster preparedness grant that allowed her to travel to Micronesia. This opportunity gave her a deeper understanding of the unique cultures and lifestyles throughout Micronesia. Wanting to work closer with the community, in 2007 she joined Kōkua Kalihi Valley (KKV) Comprehensive Family Services as the Tobacco Programs Coordinator. Here she worked with staff to strengthen the internal clinical structure to better support tobacco cessation and prevention efforts including training staff, creating culturally sensitive education materials and programming, and setting up a referral system across all departments. Megan also worked outside the clinic, creating and conducting several youth programs (including a peer leadership program supporting high school students to mentor their peers regarding substance abuse) and outreaching to community members about the dangers of tobacco and betel nut use at churches, parks, and beaches. Partnering with outside organizations she served as the community policy chair for the Coalition for Tobacco Free Hawai‘i to advocate for policies to protect the community from the harmful effects of tobacco, and worked with Hawai‘i Primary Care Association to share KKV’s programs with other community health centers across the State. During her time at KKV, Megan learned the true meaning of patient centered care and community partnership. It also gave her the perspective that tobacco use wasn’t the problem, but a result of larger issues, including discrimination. Megan is currently a doctoral candidate in the University of Hawaii’s Public Health Department’s Translational Research Program. Her dissertation is focusing on the effects of racial discrimination on the health and healthcare access of Micronesians living in Hawai‘i. She is grateful for the opportunity to volunteer with COFA CAN and is learning so much from its members about community organizing and advocacy.

