

Pacific Island Health Officers Association

Closing the Gap, Pacific Islander Health • June/July 2000

Dedicated to the health and well-being of Pacific Island populations, the Pacific Island Health Officers Association (PIHOA) serves as the unifying voice and credible authority on issues of regional significance. That mission is attained through collaborative efforts in capacity-building, advocacy, and policy development, to provide medical care, promote healthy lifestyles, prevent disease and injury, and protect the environment.

PIHOA was founded in 1986 in Honolulu, Hawai'i, as the regional health association representing the interests of the Territory of American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Territory of Guam, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau.

PIHOA is a membership association and has been incorporated as a non-profit organization in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands since 1987. The association is made up of the principal health officers of the six Pacific countries and territories affiliated with the United States.

Strategic priorities for 2001 to 2005

Collaborative activities and projects will be initiated with partners in the following:

- Environmental health
- Human resources development and management
- Health information systems and management
- Telemedicine and telehealth
- Chronic, non-communicable diseases (diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, etc.)
- Selected communicable diseases (tuberculosis and leprosy)
- Controlling Hepatitis B and C, which includes sentinel disease surveillance and reporting.
- Developing and planning for the health workforce.
- Reviewing and analyzing medical referral costs.
- Publishing a health data matrix for the Pacific Islands.
- Publishing an e-mail directory for the Pacific Islands.
- Providing technical assistance to members and coordinating with Federal agencies involved in the Pacific Islands.
- Supporting the Pacific maternal and child health program coordinators' meetings.

Sample areas of past and current work

- Developing a regional health policy.
- Capacity-building and strengthening Pacific Island health professional associations.
- Supporting and utilizing telecommunication technology for improved medical care.
- Supporting regional oral health needs assessment.
- Supporting initiative for regional public health reference laboratory.
- Supporting computer and epidemiological training activities.

PIHOA Directors

President,

Joseph Villagomez
Secretary of Health
Commonwealth of the Northern
Mariana Islands

Vice-President,

Dr. Joseph Tufa
Director of Health
American Samoa

Secretary,

Hon. Masao Ueda
Minister of Health
Republic of Palau

Treasurer,

Dr. Eliuel Pretrick
Secretary of Health, Education, and
Social Affairs
Federated States of Micronesia

Hon. Tadashi Lometo
Minister of Health and Environment
Republic of the Marshall Islands

Dennis Rodriguez
Director of Health
Guam

For more information, contact: Dr. Stephen Karel, PIHOA Executive Office, 1890 East West Road, Moore 427, School of Public Health, University of Hawai'i, Honolulu, HI 96822, (808) 956-6224, fax (808) 9569512, e-mail: pihoa@hawaii.edu. ❖