

NATIVE HAWAIIAN HEALTH SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Testimony

"Reconciliation Process" Hearing
Native Hawaiian Health and Education

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DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM:

The Native Hawaiian Health Scholarship Program (NHHSF), which began on October 1, 1990, is currently authorized by the Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act of 1992 (P.L. 102-396). The purpose of the Native Hawaiian Health Scholarship Program is to: improve the health status of Native Hawaiians by selecting Native Hawaiians for scholarships to be trained in selected health professions and prepare scholarship recipients to deliver primary health care services to Native Hawaiians as well as disadvantaged and vulnerable populations in underserved rural communities.

The Native Hawaiian Health Scholarship Program is funded through a cooperative agreement between the Bureau of Primary Health Care Public Health Service and Kamehameha Schools Bishop Estate. The program provides scholarships to Native Hawaiian students pursuing careers in health professions that are identified through a needs assessment conducted annually by Papa Ola Lōkahi. The list of professions varies over time. In the early years of the program, for example, the needs assessment identified medical doctors as high need. Thus, many of the early scholarship recipients were enrolled in MD degree programs. Over time, as this need has been met, the number of MD students has declined, and the enrollment of students in other disciplines has increased.

Scholarship assistance includes full tuition, a monthly stipend (\$935 was provided for the 1998-1999 academic year - this amount increases by 10% each year), funds for books and supplies and other reasonable educational expenses. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) considers the entire scholarship (tuition and fees, stipends, books and supplies and other reasonable costs) to be taxable income. This action is necessitated by the IRS's interpretation of a provision in the Internal Revenue code (26 USC§117c), which authorizes taxation of amounts representing payment for services required as a condition of receiving the scholarship.

ELIGIBILITY:

In order to be eligible for the scholarship, applicants must be Native Hawaiian with proof of U.S. citizenship and must be enrolled or accepted into an accredited health profession's training program.

SELECTION CRITERIA:

The Native Hawaiian Health Scholarship Program awards are very competitive. The applications for scholarship awards exceed the funds that are available. Each year we have over 450 requests for applications from Native Hawaiian students. Sixty to eighty eligible applicants are selected each year. Only 8 to 10 students are awarded scholarships. The Native Hawaiian Health Scholarship Program considers well-prepared applicants who demonstrate an interest in providing primary health care services to Native Hawaiian Population of greatest need. Priority is given to disciplines that are identified in the Native Hawaiian health care needs assessment provided by Papa Ola Lōkahi.

Eligible candidates and each applicant's interview responses are rated based on:

- Interest in a primary health care field of study;
- Work experience in a health setting;
- Work experience in a Native Hawaiian community;
- Educational and career goals;
- Commitment to service for Native Hawaiians in health professional shortage and medically underserved areas in the State of Hawaii;
- Knowledge of Native Hawaiian culture, language and values.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES:

Retention

Retention activities include close monitoring of scholarship recipients in training to ensure academic progress. Transcripts are reviewed at the end of each semester and meetings are held with academic advisors regularly. Scholarship recipients meet with the NHHS Program Director at least three times each semester.

Counseling

All scholarship recipients, both in training and in service, receive counseling. In compliance with the program's authorizing legislation, counseling is also provided to disadvantaged students enrolled in health professions courses of study. Extensive counseling is provided to students in training. Counseling focuses on major areas of student concerns:

- Taking responsibility for personal choices;
- Clarifying conflicting values;
- Time management;
- Dealing with personal relationships;
- Lack of self-esteem;
- Inability to discuss and clarify expected academic standards with faculty and academic advisors;
- Academic planning;
- Anxiety and feelings of helplessness and inadequacy;
- Lack of self-confidence and assertiveness;
- Difficulty adjusting to academic and structured environments;
- Selecting priorities to comply with academic expectations;
- Feelings of alienation and powerlessness.

Prepare Scholarship Recipients in Training for Service Commitments

Individual counseling and discussions with students are vital components of this program. The NIHS Program Director provides counseling and conducts workshops, group discussions and seminars to better prepare the students for primary health care services in rural communities. Topics selected for additional training complement the curricula in schools and colleges the students attend, such as:

- Multi-professional team work;
- Social-awareness, interpersonal skills and self-conception;
- Leadership training;
- Students' conception of their field of study;
- Native Hawaiian culture and values and how to incorporate these in health care services to Native Hawaiians.
- Culture Health and illness
- Community participation in Primary Health Care

Research

The NIHS Program Director reviews current research, publications, and journal articles relevant to the students' field of studies to provide new knowledge on health issues to both students in

training and in service. NHHSP maintains a resource library and subscribes to a number of journals and publications.

CURRENT STATUS OF SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS:

Ninety-one Native Hawaiian students have received scholarships so far. We have in the program:

- 30 Medical Doctors
- 18 Nurses
- 7 Psychologists
- 2 Dentists
- 8 Dental Hygienists
- 6 Public Health Workers
- 15 Social Workers
- 1 Midwife
- 4 Nurse Practitioners

Out of these, 44 scholarship recipients (after graduation) have been placed in medically underserved and health professional shortage areas in the State of Hawai'i.