Session 1: We Are Not the Same: Understanding the Impact of COVID and Social Injustices on the Diverse AA, NH & PI Communities

May 10, 2021 @ 2:00 - 3:30 p.m. EDT

**Moderator: Keawe’aimoku Kaholokula PhD** Chair and Associate Professor of Native Hawaiian Health and Deputy Director for the Center of Native and Pacific Health Disparities in the School of Medicine (JABSOM) at UHM. His current research is funded by the NIH to examine biological, psychological, and socio-cultural factors (and their interplay) affecting Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander health and to develop community-based and culturally-relevant interventions.

**Moderator: Azizah Ahmad, JD** is the Policy & Community Advocacy Manager at APIA Health Forum APIAHF in SF, CA. Azizah has a long history of advocating for policies affecting indigenous, Southeast Asian, and AA NHPI communities and is an active member of the Cham community. She has also had leadership roles with the National APA Bar Association and served as the California Policy Advocate at the SEA Resource Action Center and clerked for nonprofits including the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Kuala Lumpur.

**Sefa Aina** – Board Chair of Empowering Pacific Islander Communities, EPIC; Associate Dean and Director of the Asian American Resource Center at Pomona College. He has committed his life to empowering Pacific Islanders and is actively engaged in creating access to education opportunities for Pacific Islander youth. Sefa was appointed by President Obama to the President’s Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders where he served as the Vice-Chair of the Commission from 2010 – 2014.

**Theanvy Kuoch, MA, LPC** is the founder and Exec Dir of the Khmer Health Advocates Inc. in West Hartford, CT. Theanvy is a survivor of war, torture and genocide in Cambodia and came to the US as a refugee in 1981. She is a nationally recognized expert on trauma and trauma informed care. Theanvy is a family therapist and developed the Community CARES Model that trains Community Health Workers. Theanvy is partnering with the UCONN Schools of Medicine, Pharmacy and Social Work to complete an NIH research project to understand the impact of culturally appropriate health promotions to prevent diabetes in traumatized people.

**Juhi Malhotra** serves on the Executive Committee of the NY Coalition for Asian American Mental Health. She is a Clinical Instructor at NYU Silver, with more than fifteen years of clinical experience focusing on crisis intervention, diagnostic assessments, short term and long term care within a multidisciplinary approach. She was also an academic and field advisor at Columbia University School of Social Work. She also taught seminars with a concentration on anti-oppression, self-awareness, and career preparation.
Jennifer Wang, JD. Deputy Director of Programs, National Asian Pacific Women’s Forum NAPAWF in Washington, DC. She is a strong advocate for women’s rights and became involved in legislative affairs for federal and state reproductive health policy, developing an expertise on birth control and preventive health services under the Affordable Care Act. She has degrees in psychology and women’s studies in addition to her JD and is passionate about the intersection of reproductive justice and economic justice.

Moderator: Rachele EspirituPhD is founding partner of Change Matrix with expertise in children’s mental health, substance abuse prevention, elimination of disparities in behavioral health, cultural and linguistic competence, public health and program evaluation. She focuses on strategic planning and implementation, organizational and systems change, culturally competent program evaluation. She has worked with federal, state, and community representatives to build capacity for children’s behavioral health care services and collaborating systems. Rachele was also a faculty member at Georgetown University.

Krystle Canare, Program Specialist, Georgetown U. Center for Child/ Human Dev. She was a senior project coordinator for the Nat. Council for Behavioral Health and an Ambassador for the White House Initiative on Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders during the Obama Administration, a Health Equity Ambassador for the American Psychological Association, the Task Force Fellowship Dir for the Filipino Young Leaders Program, Advisor to the Filipino Intercollegiate Networking Dialogue, and Coach for the Nat Federation of Filipino American Association's Empowering Pilipino Youth through Collaboration (EPYC) program.

Terry S. Gock, Ph.D., M.P.A. is the Co-Founder and Director Emeritus of the Asian Pacific Family Center (APFC) in Los Angeles, CA. Under his leadership APFC grew to a staff of nearly 100 providing a wide array of much needed services. In addition to his public sector work, he is also a clinical and forensic psychologist in private practice. Dr. Gock received the Person of the Year award from the Asian Pacific Americans for Human Rights as well the American Psychological Association Presidential Citation, for his lifelong devotion to multiculturalism in psychology

Patrick Kamakawiwo’ole PhD is a clinical psychologist in Honolulu who works with individuals experiencing life transitions, depression, anxiety, grief, loss, nearing death, cultural challenges, sexuality, gender, and trauma. His local Hawai’i background helps him relate to strengths and differences in collectivistic communities. In addition to a Humanistic theoretical frame, I am trained in EMDR and Emotionally-Focused Therapy. Dr. Kamakawiwo’ole works with people by using his na‘au, feelings and intuition, his local Chinese, Hawaiian, and local Hawai’i values, and is always open to different ways of being.
Thanh Nguyen MSW, Vietnamese Clinician, Asian Pacific Development Center, Denver, CO. Thanh is married and has an 18 month old son. She was born and raised in Saigon, Vietnam and moved to Colorado in her early 20s to reunite with her father. She received her Bachelor and Master’s Degree in Social Work and uses her experience and knowledge of Vietnamese culture and history to guide her work as a behavioral health clinician at APDCI working primarily with the Vietnamese population.

Sudarsharn Pyakurel is a former refugee from Bhutan and serves as the Exec Dir of the Bhutanese Community of Central Ohio. He is also the founder of the Bhutanese American Students Organization, founder and Managing Director of Jagaran America a Nepali Newspaper. Since coming to the us in 2010, he has been actively working for equity, advocacy, and empowerment of refugees and immigrants. He is a member of the Trauma Responsive Care through CARE Coalition, Member of the Refugee Congress, and Migrant and Refugee Leadership Academy, fellow. Named in June 2018 by Ohio Governor John Kasich to the New American Advisory Committee.

Pata Suyemoto PhD is a feminist scholar, writer, educator, mental health activist, and a co-founder of The Breaking Silences Project. She earned her PhD. in education and did her research on multicultural education and issues of race and racism. She speaks and writes about her struggles with depression. She is a member of the Multicultural Advisory Committee for the Massachusetts Dept of Mental Health, and a co-chair for the sub-committee of the AAPI Anti-Stigma Campaign. Dr. Suyemoto is also an artist who is particularly interested in collage and three-dimensional found art and is avid cyclist, and bicycle riding instructor. During the summer of 2012 she and her partner rode their bicycles across the United States from Massachusetts to Washington State.

Session 3: What’s Next? Community Action for Transformational Change
DATE: Thursday, May 27 @ 3:00-4:30 p.m. EDT

Moderator: Larke Huang PhD recently retired as the Dir of the Office of Behavioral Health Equity and a Senior Policy Advisor at the US Dept of HHS SAMHSA. A leading national expert on mental health policy, she served on the President’s New Freedom Commission on MH, and the Carter Center MH Task Force. Dr. Huang is a licensed clinical-community psychologist who has interfaces policy, research and practice in behavioral health. Dr. Huang focuses on reducing disparities in behavioral health care for underserved populations, working with States and counties to improve systems of care for children and youth with serious mental and substance use disorders, advancing trauma-informed approaches to care/recovery, and reducing the criminal/juvenile justice system for individuals with mental and substance use disorders.
Richele Concepcion, PsyD President Asian American Psychological Association. She is also Clinical Psychologist at the United States Army – Schofield Barracks Health Clinic, is the Clinical Representative (Disaster Response Task Force) for the Hawaii Psychological Association and serves as a Public Health Officer with the Hawaii Air National Guard on Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam. Her areas of clinical interest include: diversity issues among veterans/active duty service members, health promotion/education, and the integration of traditional healing methods with psychotherapy.

Melisa Laelan: Founder and Exec Dir of the Arkansas Coalition of Marshallese (ACOM). Laelan worked with the Washington Country Juvenile Detention Center, where she saw the lack of interpreters for Marshallese navigating the justice system. She became the first certified Marshallese language court interpreter in the nation. In 2011, she started ACOM to improve services to the Marshallese community. She knew the community would be hit hard by COVID19 because of the ongoing health conditions. The Marshallese are 71 times more likely to be infected than whites, 96 times more likely to be hospitalized, and 65 times more likely to die.

Nira Singh, PsyD Director of Behavioral Health at Asian Americans for Community Involvement AACI, has served for over 25 years focusing on immigrant and refugee populations. She worked with Narika, a domestic violence program serving South Asian women and children and has worked with coalitions to address cultural competency and cultural humility in the training of service providers and has been involved in developing and implementing trauma informed and strength based services throughout the Bay Area. She was Dir of Children Youth and Family Services at Richmond Area Multi-Services (RAMS).

Ed K.S. Wang, PsyD Asst Prof of Psychology, Dep of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, Dir of Policy and Planning for the Chester M. Pierce, MD Division of Global Psychiatry and Board Pres of NAAPIMHA. He served as the Dir of the Office of Multicultural Affairs of the Mass Dep of MH. Dr. Wang focuses on U.S. and international mental health policy, program development, and clinical excellence to integrate evidence-based practice, community-based participatory research, network development, and community partnerships. He was the first Asian American psychologist appointed to the National Advisory Council, SAMHSA

Isha Weerasinghe is a senior policy analyst at the Center for Law and Social Policy CLASP, in Washington DC, focusing on health, mental health, children, youth/families and racial equity. Ms. Weerasinghe previously worked as the Dir of Policy and Advocacy at the Association for Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations AAPCHO, where she focused on improving access to linguistically/culturally appropriate care for AA, NH & PIs. Ms. Weerasinghe has done community based participatory research, as well as local and state policy advocacy at NYU’s Center for the Study of Asian American Health (CSAAH).