University of Hawai‘i Representatives Brief US Deputy Secretary of HHS

Co-director Christina Higa briefed HHS Deputy Secretary Eric D. Hargan on Telehealth in the Pacific. Visit the following University of Hawai‘i JABSOM link to read more about the deputy secretary's visit: https://jabsom.hawaii.edu/hhs-deputy-secretary-visits-kakaako-for-rare-update-and-strategy-session-on-hawaii-pacific-health/
WHO Regional Director Meets with UH Leaders and Faculty to Discuss Pacific Health

Christina Higa and Dr. Norman Okamura of PBTRC attend meeting with WHO Regional Director Dr. Takeshi Kasai. Please visit the UH JABSOM link for more details: https://jabsom.hawaii.edu/who-regional-director-meets-with-uh-experts-to-exchange-ideas-about-pacific-region-health/

Co-director Christina Higa and Dr. Norman Okamura Brief the PIHOA Executive Board

Christina Higa and Dr. Norman Okamura of PBTRC participated in the 66th PIHOA Executive Board Meeting in Honolulu. Christina provided an update on telehealth and the available resources in the region. Dr. Okamura provided a briefing on the status of the Medicaid fiscal cliff and its impact in the Pacific Island territories.
PBTRC provided assistance and participated in the 2019 Hawai’i Maternal Telehealth Summit on October 9 at the Sullivan Center at the University of Hawai’i Cancer Center. The summit was headed by Dr. Men Jean Lee, Maternal Fetal Medicine (MFM) Specialist and Division Chief of MFM, UH JABSOM and primarily sponsored by the Department of Health. This summit brought together approximately 80 participants from maternal telehealth stakeholders from across the state of Hawai’i including good representation from the neighbor islands. The keynote speaker was Dr. Curtis Lowery, director of University of Arkansas Medical Center (UAMS) Institute for Digital Health and Innovation (IDHI). He is the founder of Antenatal and Neonatal Guidelines, Education, and Learning System (ANGELS), a Medicaid-funded telehealth program for high-risk pregnancies. Dr. Lowery discussed the factors that made the Arkansas telemedicine model successful. For instance, the importance of having a 24/7 centralized tech support and scheduling call center. Teague Johnson, director of technology at IDHI shared information on specific telehealth equipment and devices they utilize. Dr. Joseph Humphrey of Lanai Community Health Center shared the ways in which telehealth was being utilized at Lanai Community Health Center for maternal health and other applications including chronic disease management. Lt. Governor, Dr. Josh Green, addressed the audience and expressed his support for telehealth in our island state. Participants engaged in a facilitated discussion that teased out some of the current benefits and barriers of telehealth; participants indicated a need for a common telehealth platform for scheduling consults, coordinating video links with patients and secure messaging.
with patients and between providers; and expressed interest in the technical support model presented by UAMS IDHI that made the technology piece of telemedicine simple for the providers.

PBTRC Participates in the 2019 Hawai‘i Health Workforce Summit

PBTRC participated in the 2019 Hawai‘i Health Workforce Summit on September 7 at the Hilton Hawaiian Village Coral Ballrooms. 600 participants were expected to attend the one-day conference, representing all areas in medicine. Some of the topics covered at the conference were opioids, interprofessional practice, healthcare provider happiness, and telehealth! Our PBTRC booth provided over 100 participants with literature, information, and discussions on Telehealth. Please visit the following link for the presentations and more information on the Summit: https://www.ahec.hawaii.edu/2019-workforce-summit/

Dr. Deborah Peters Attended Several Conferences this Summer Including the NCTRC Fall Retreat in St. Louis

Our PBTRC co-program director, Dr. Deborah Peters, attended two conferences this summer: one hosted by the Northwest Regional Telehealth Resource Center held in Anchorage, Alaska and the other by the Northeast Telehealth Resource Center in Portland, Maine. She also spoke at the 2019 Region D State Offices of Rural Health (SORH) Regional Partnership Meeting in Kona, HI.

Dr. Peters also attended the National Consortium for Telehealth Resource Centers Fall retreat in St. Louis. We are excited to announce that PBTRC will be hosting the Spring retreat in Honolulu this coming February.

Nena Tolenoa of Kosrae Community Health Center Stops by for a Visit
On September 18, Mr. Nena Tolenoa Executive Director of Kosrae Community Health Center (KCHC) visited PBTRC. Mr. Tolenoa is a strong proponent of telehealth in Kosrae where they have implemented an integrated behavioral mental health program with the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Hawai‘i JABSOM.

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**A glimpse of hope for COFA Veterans as Bill S.1222 (COFA Veterans Review Act of 2019) introduced in Congress**

By Erick Ochola


Despite having served honorably in the U.S military dating back to World War II until present, COFA Veterans have faced many challenges such as having to travel thousands of miles to the U.S. to receive health care and other services from the
Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

This bill will require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program to provide hospital care and medical services to veterans in the Freely Associated States, and to conduct a study on the feasibility and advisability of establishing regional offices, sub-offices, contact units, or other subordinate offices of the Department of Veterans Affairs in these locations to provide such care and services, and for other purposes.

Currently, the bill has been read twice and have been referred to the committee on Veterans Affairs where it will be deliberated before being sent to the house or the Senate. As any other bill, it will have to pass the House and Senate before it can be signed by the the President in to law.

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**Funding Opportunities**

**Funding Opportunity Title:** Strategies to Improve Health Outcomes and to Reduce Disparities in Rural Populations (RO1 Clinical Trial Option)

**Funding Opportunity Number:** RFA-NR-20-001

**Open Date:** October 11, 2019

**Close Date:** December 13, 2019

**Estimated Total Program Funding:** $2,500,000

**Award Ceiling:** $350,000


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**Funding Opportunity Title:** State Offices of Rural Health Coordination and Development Program

**Funding Opportunity Number:** HRSA-20-085

**Open Date:** September 11, 2019

**Close Date:** December 20, 2019

**Estimated Total Program Funding:** $750,000

**Award Ceiling:** $750,000

**Weblink to Grant Opportunity:** [https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=315916](https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=315916)

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**Funding Opportunity Title:** Improving the Reach and Quality of Cancer Care in Rural Populations (RO1 Clinical Trial Required)
**Funding Opportunity Number:** RFA-CA-19-064  
**Open Date:** September 12, 2019  
**Close Date:** January 15, 2020  
**Estimated Total Program Funding:** $3,000,000  
**Weblink to Grant Opportunity:** [https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=320555](https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=320555)

**Funding Opportunity Title:** Regional Genetics Networks  
**Funding Opportunity Number:** HRSA-20-046  
**Open Date:** October 16, 2019  
**Close Date:** January 14, 2020  
**Estimated Total Program Funding:** $4,200,000  
**Award Ceiling:** $600,000  
**Weblink to Grant Opportunity:** [https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=319403](https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=319403)