



Na Leo Ola

Newsletter of the Hawai'i Medical Association

Volume 6, Issue 7

July 2026

OLA PONO IKE Honoree Spotlight

Benjamin Young, MD HMA Lifetime Achievement Award

A pioneer physician, and the first Native Hawaiian psychiatrist, Dr. Benjamin B. Young is receiving the 2026 HMA Lifetime Achievement Award for his distinguished contributions to medicine, medical education, and the health of Hawai'i's people.

A proud graduate of Roosevelt High School, Dr. Young did his pre-medical studies at Pepperdine University. He earned his medical degree at Howard University College of Medicine, then returned home to complete his residency at the University of Hawai'i Psychiatric Integrated Residency Training program.

His storied career highlights include Dean of Students at JABSOM; Vice President of Student Affairs at the University of Hawai'i; Chief of Staff at Castle Medical Center; and Executive Director of the Native Hawaiian Center of Excellence. In the community, Dr. Young has been a board member of the Washington Place Foundation and the Hawaiian Historical Society; President of the Polynesian Voyaging Society; and the physician on the maiden voyage of the Hōkūle'a.

L-R: Marc Alexander; Nadine Tenn Salle, MD; Benjamin Young, MD; Angela Pratt, MD

Nationally, Dr. Young was the Founder and Chairman of the National Council for Diversity in Health Professions; National Chair for the Conference on Violence Prevention; and National Chair for all Deans of Student Affairs, for all medical schools in the U.S.

Dr. Young helped open pathways for future physicians with the creation of the 'Imi Ho'ōla Program, a first-of-its-kind effort that greatly increased opportunities in medicine for Pacific Islanders and other underrepresented groups. His legacy reflects a lifelong commitment to healing, education, cultural understanding, and strengthening the physician workforce in Hawai'i.

CELEBRATE DR. YOUNG'S CAREER AT OLA PONO IKE 2026!

A distinguished career such as Dr. Young's deserves to be celebrated. Mark your calendars for **Saturday, September 26, 2026** and join us at the **Hilton Hawaiian Village**, as we honor a lifetime of service. Registration is open and can be done securely online at hawaiimedicalassociation.org. Consider getting a table and inviting your colleagues and staff to the celebration.



President's Message

by Nadine Tenn Salle, MD



Trust is the foundation of every effective health care system.

Patients trust physicians with their health, families, and futures. Physicians trust that the systems surrounding them will allow them to deliver the care their patients deserve. Health plans, hospitals, government, and community organizations all depend on that same trust to work together toward better health.

When trust is strong, collaboration becomes possible. Difficult conversations become productive. Innovation can occur. Even during times of uncertainty and change, shared purpose allows us to move forward together.

Hawai'i's physicians are facing significant discussions surrounding payment reform, practice sustainability, and the future of health care delivery. While perspectives may differ, one principle should remain constant: meaningful solutions require transparency, respectful dialogue, and trust among all stakeholders.

The Hawai'i Medical Association remains committed to serving as a trusted, physician-led forum where diverse voices can come together to address our state's most pressing health care challenges. Our role is not simply to respond to change, but to help shape thoughtful, patient-centered solutions that strengthen access to care, support our physician workforce, and improve the health of our communities.

Building trust takes time, consistency, and a willingness to listen. It also requires all of us to remain engaged.

Mahalo for your continued commitment to your patients, your colleagues, and the profession of medicine. Together, we can build a stronger and more sustainable health care system for Hawai'i.

2026 Legislative Report

Advocacy for Hawai'i's physician is one of the main missions of the Hawai'i Medical Association, and each year, your Public Policy Committee engages with the legislature to forward the legislative priorities set by our membership.

Please read through the 2026 Legislative Report - attached to the end of this newsletter - which highlights the successes achieved by our Public Policy Committee, and reminds us of the work that still needs to be done in future legislative sessions.



ATTEND THE 2026 HAWAII LIVER SUMMIT

The annual liver summit is coming to Honolulu on November 21, 2026. Topics will include:

- Liver disease and liver cancer prevention
- Simplified hepatitis B guidance for team-based care
- Patient perspectives on liver disease care
- Technological advancements in care, diagnosis, and assessment
- Hepatitis epidemiology in Hawai'i
- Hepatitis elimination progress in Hawai'i
- And more!

To register for the summit, please visit hepbtaskforce.org/event/the-hawaii-liver-summit-2026. For more info, contact Amy Trang, PhD at administrator@hepbtaskforce.org.

Conversations at HMA Postponed

Our next Conversations at HMA, featuring Geri Young, MD and Angela Gough, DO from Pu'ulu Lapa'au, is being postponed due to scheduling conflicts.

Watch our website and this newsletter for a new conversation date with Pu'ulu Lapa'au.



Insurance **by** physicians, **for** physicians.™