



Na Pu`uwai
Native Hawaiian Health Care System
PO Box 130 Kaunakakai, Hawaii 96748
(808) 560-3653 • Fax (808) 560-3385

PRESS RELEASE:

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On April 1st, 2020, Dr. Landon Oponui, ND was announced as the new medical director of Nā Pu‘uwai, one of five Native Hawaiian Health Care Systems, serving the islands of Moloka‘i and Lāna‘i. Federally funded through the Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act, Dr. Oponui becomes the first Naturopathic Physician in history to be promoted to the position of medical director within a Native Hawaiian Health Care System.

Dr. Oponui’s first connection with the island of Moloka‘i was in the wa‘a when he landed in Hale O Lono harbor aboard the Hōkūle‘a during an inter-island voyage from Maui enroute to O‘ahu. Since then he has been fortunate to cross the Kaiwi channel 8x in both the 6-man outrigger canoe during the Moloka‘i Hoe and in his 1-man surfing canoe.

Dr. Oponui’s Hawaiian grandmother is his inspiration to pursue medicine as a career due to her premature passing from chronic health conditions and limited access to health care. After graduation from Kamehameha Kapalama, he did his pre-med undergraduate studies at Loyola Marymount before then going on to naturopathic medical school at Bastyr University in Seattle. Following residency in Kailua-Kona, Dr. Oponui worked as a PCP in Hawai‘i’s largest integrative medical practice in Honolulu working alongside MDs, Physician Assistants, Nurse Practitioners, PTs, OTs, psychologists, chiropractors, acupuncturists and massage therapists. He shortly thereafter became the first ND in history to become fully credentialed as a PCP within HMSAs network providing mainstream access to naturopathic medical services for the first time in Hawai‘i’s history.

Dr. Oponui often views naturopathic medicine as a bridge between western and traditional healing practices because naturopathic doctors are licensed to assess, diagnose and treat disease like medical doctors, but the profession offers several other therapeutic tools besides surgery and medication that are connected closer to nature like traditional practitioners.

Dr. Oponui believes in a multi-modality, team-based, collaborative approach to preventing and managing disease while addressing the root cause of illness. When the right space and support is created for a patient, health can blossom and transform. His vision for Na Pu‘uwai is to create innovative new programs that address the health needs of the community, develop improved team collaborate with shared goals, promote collaboration amongst the healthcare providers, clinics and hospitals within the communities we serve, improve Native Hawaiian health outcomes, and achieve financial success as an organization

Dr. Oponui currently resides in Kāne‘ohe on the windward side of O‘ahu. During his free time, he strives to practice what he preaches by working in his garden and paddling for Kailua Canoe Club where he also serves as a Board Member.

While weaving the traditional views of health and healing with our modern understanding of science and medicine, Dr. Oponui has unique training and perspective to address health disparities within Hawaiian communities. He is humbled and excited by the opportunity to be a pioneer in creating a better future for the people of Moloka‘i and Lāna‘i through improving Native Hawaiian health outcomes.

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