

PAPA OLA LŌKAHI

The original Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act (NHHCIA), initially passed in 1988 to raise the health status of Native Hawaiians to the highest possible level, created five Native Hawaiian Health Care Systems (NHHCS) and Papa Ola Lōkahi. Papa Ola Lōkahi addresses health disparities through strategic partnerships, programs, and public policy. It also serves as the body with which federal agencies shall consult around issues of Hawaiian health policy and healthcare.

The Native Hawaiian Health Care Systems are charged with providing services by Native Hawaiian health care practitioners and cultural educators. Health care services may be provided by traditional Native Hawaiian healers.

Papa Ola Lōkahi's role—supported by Hawai'i statute 453-2—is to recognize, convene, and provide technical support to kupuna councils, made up of practitioners of Native Hawaiian healing traditions. All are focused on preserving, protecting, and perpetuating traditional Hawaiian healing practices.

NHHCIA defines “traditional Native Hawaiian Healer” as: *A practitioner... who... is of Hawaiian ancestry, and... has the knowledge, skills, and experience in direct personal health care of individuals, and... whose knowledge, skills and experience are based on a demonstrated learning of Native Hawaiian healing practices acquired by direct practical association with Native Hawaiian elders and... oral traditions transmitted from generation to generation* [Sec. 11711(10)].

Several State AND Federal laws impact traditional Hawaiian healers and healing practices. For more information, please contact Papa Ola Lōkahi.

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KŪPUNA COUNCILS OF TRADITIONAL HAWAIIAN HEALING PRACTICES

PRESERVE, PROTECT, PERPETUATE

Established in 2002,

Kūpuna Councils are a group of healing and cultural practitioners, with a minimum of three Native Hawaiians proficient in traditional Hawaiian healing practices. After recognition by Papa Ola Lōkahi, they share responsibility for serving the Hawaiian community and improving their health status with a health organization, dedicated to preserving, protecting, and perpetuating traditional Hawaiian healing practices.

There are various Kūpuna Councils across Hawai'i with various roles and functions. Those recognized by Papa Ola Lōkahi focus on traditional Native Hawaiian healing.

Kūpuna Councils were created to:

- Distinguish practitioners of Hawaiian healing traditions from medical clinicians in Hawai'i
- Complement and integrate into holistic health care delivery
- Provide cultural consultation and protections as assured by the Hawai'i State Constitution

If a traditional Native Hawaiian healer would like to join a Kūpuna Council recognized by Papa Ola Lōkahi:

- Seek membership with an existing Kūpuna Council, or
- Form a council of practitioners and apply to Papa Ola Lōkahi for recognition.

To apply for recognition, a new Kūpuna Council shall:

- Be affiliated with/supported by a Native Hawaiian Health Care System, Federally Qualified Health Center, Rural Health Center, or Federally Designated Look-Alike.
- Develop guidelines for membership and recognition of healing practitioners.
- Provide Papa Ola Lōkahi annual updates
- Engage and share with other kupuna councils
- Demonstrate support from your organizational Board of Directors by a letter of commitment signed by a Board chairperson and highest organization employee.
- List a minimum of 3 Native Hawaiians, their traditional healing practice, and the mo'okū'auhau (genealogy) for each practice.

Kūpuna Councils have self-governing authority to establish:

1. Membership criteria
2. Eligibility for practitioner recognition
3. How the Council governs and sustains itself.

