



# KA LĀHUI HAWAI'I

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Isiah "Black" Ho'ohuli  
Kia'aina (Governor)

## Intervention of Ka Lahui Hawai'i to the Working Group on Indigenous Peoples Seventeenth Session – July 26-30, 1999 Agenda Item #6 – Indigenous Peoples and Health

Keali'i Gora  
Lukanele Kia'aina  
Lt. Governor

Madame Chair and members of the Working Group on  
Indigenous Peoples. Aloha and Mahalo for this opportunity to testify on  
the health status of the Hawaiian people.

Maane Pale  
Kākau 'Ōlelo (Secretary)

Keolu Kinilau  
Pu'ukū Lāhui (Treasurer)

### Introduction

The colonization of Native Hawaiians and their subsequent loss of land and traditional livelihoods has led to their current health statistics, which are the worst in the state of Hawai'i and in the U.S.

The two most significant indicators of health are morbidity and mortality rates. The morbidity statistics of Native Hawaiians indicates heart disease, cancer, and diabetes as the three most troubling diseases and the leading causes of health related deaths among Hawaiians.

The morbidity and mortality statistics of Native Hawaiians suggest a significant problem in Native Hawaiian health care. These problems have been inadequately addressed by the U.S. federal government through the Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act, a measure which is now being used as a means to undermine Native Hawaiian sovereignty.

### Heart Disease

Native Hawaiians make up 20% of Hawai'i's population, yet account for nearly 50% of all heart disease cases.

Although the number of Native Hawaiian heart disease cases number less than non-Natives (who make up 80% of Hawai'i's total population) the mortality rate of Native Hawaiians due to heart disease is significantly higher than non-Natives. In 1990, the mortality rate due to heart disease for Native Hawaiians per 100,000 was 523 compared with 189 non-Natives.

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## **Cancer**

**Native Hawaiians lead the state of Hawai'i in lung cancer. In Hawai'i, between 1986 and 1990, there were 69 incidences of lung cancer among Native Hawaiian males per 100,000 compared with 46 incidences among non-Native males, and there were 38 incidences of lung cancer among Native Hawaiian females per 100,000 compared with 23 incidences among non-Native females.**

**According to 1990 statistics, 341 Native Hawaiians per 100,000 died of cancer compared with only 67 non-Natives.**

## **Diabetes**

**Native Hawaiians account for more than 66% of all diabetes cases in Hawai'i, although they make up only 20% of the total population. According to recent statistics, the mortality rate for diabetes for Native Hawaiians per 100,000 was 57 compared with 5 for non-Natives.**

## **Health Care**

**The most recent mortality rate statistics indicate that the number of deaths related to heart disease, cancer and diabetes for Native Hawaiians far outnumber non-Native deaths in Hawai'i related to these same health conditions. According to Hawai'i's medical community, these diseases are controllable if patients are provided with adequate health care.**

## **Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act**

**The Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act was passed through the U.S. Congress in 1988. This Act set up a non-profit organization, Papa Ola Lokahi, as a health care service agency to receive U.S. federal monies and address the deplorable health statistics of Native Hawaiians.**

**In the Native Hawaiian Health Care Program report to Congress, it cited access to Health care as a major reason for the current health statistics of Native Hawaiians. This report recognized the “cultural chasm” between Western and Traditional medicine and transportation difficulties as the major dilemmas in Native Hawaiians accessing health care.**

**Since the enactment of this Native Hawaiian Health Care Program there has been no significant, positive change in Native Hawaiian health statistics. Ka Lahui Hawai’i believes that Papa Ola Lokahi has failed to provide primary medical care for Native Hawaiians with acute medical conditions, and instead has implemented only prevention programs, referral services, and cultural activities.**

### **Papa Ola Lokahi’s “Compact” with the U.S. Federal Government**

**The Native Hawaiian Health Care Act is currently under the process of reauthorization in the U.S. Congress. Current drafts of this Act allows the U.S. Secretary to “compact” with Papa Ola Lokahi, likening it’s status to that of a local government. Ka Lahui Hawai’i asserts that this “compact” language is a violation of the Native Hawaiian peoples’ right to self-determination and is another attempt by the U.S. government and its agents to keep control over our lands and entitlements. Furthermore, the Legislature of Ka Lahui Hawai’i denounces any further reference to the establishment of a “compact” between Papa Ola Lokahi and the federal government in the reauthorization of the Native Hawaiian Health Care Act.**

**Mahalo (Thank you) for the opportunity to inform this working group on the health conditions of the Native Hawaiians.**