

6<sup>th</sup> Annual Hawai‘i Conference on Language Access

*Ola Pono – Language Access in the Community Health Setting*

# Language Access in Health: Hawai‘i’s experience

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August 7-8, 2013  
East-West Center  
Honolulu, Hawaii



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## Overview

- History as a ‘health state’
  - Multicultural society
    - Beginnings
    - Federal laws
- Hawaii’s language access



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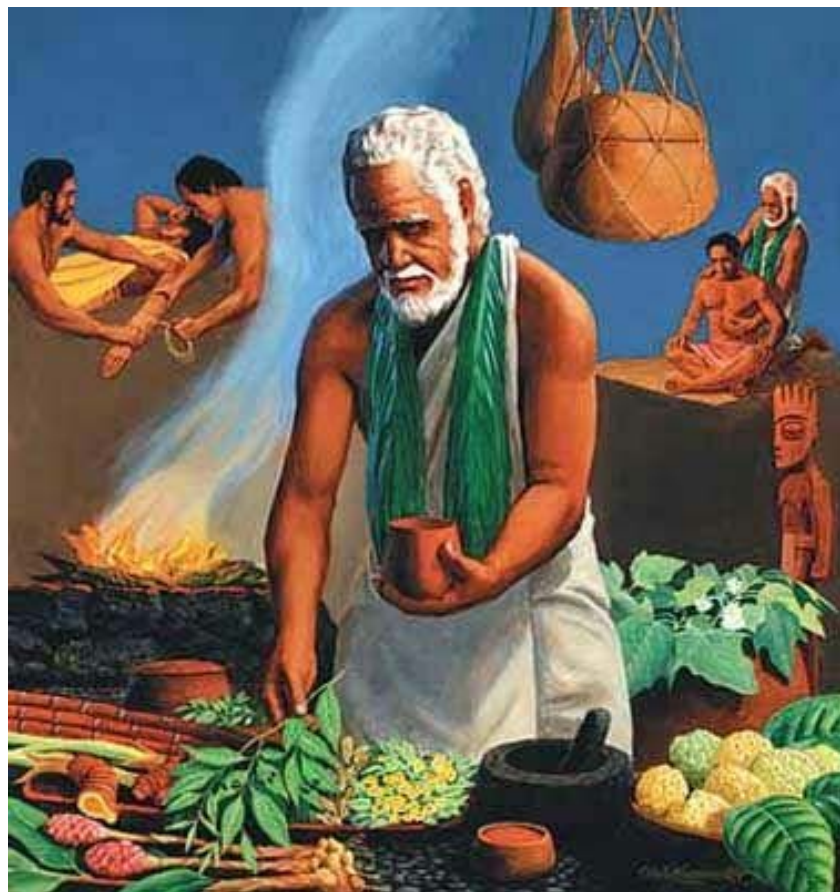
# History as a ‘health state’

- Ola is embedded in the Hawaiian culture
  - Health in the Kingdom
- Origins of the Department of Health
  - Legacy of the *ali‘i*



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- Ola is embedded in Hawaiian Culture  
*Ka po 'e kahiko from 600 CE kahuna lapa 'au*



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### Health in the Kingdom

- *Kina ‘u, kuhina nui for Kaulikeaouli*
- *First written public health measure*



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### Origins of the Department of Health

- Sanitary Commission recommends a Board of Health.



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### Legacy of the ali‘i

- The Queen’s Medical Center
  - Hawai‘i State Hospital
    - Lunalilo Home
  - Kapi‘olani Medical Center
    - Kamehameha Schools
- Queen Lili‘uokalani Children’s Center



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Labor needs and migration waves

- Restore population
- Health care in the plantations





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# Labor needs and migration waves

- Hawaiians 250,000 at contact; 40,622 by 1890
  - 1876-97 – 46,000 Chinese
  - 1877-96 – 18,000 Portuguese
  - 1885-1924 – 180,000 Japanese
  - 1900-01 – 6,000 Puerto Rican
    - 1901-05 – 8,000 Koreans
    - 1906-34 – 125,000 Filipino
    - 1907-13 – 8,000 Spanish

- 5,800 Germans, Galicians, Russians, Pacific Islanders+



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# Health care in the plantations

- Sugar planters hired physicians to care for workers and families - developed plantation care system
- Cultural and social care factors evident in plantation care system still visible today (“cradle to grave” medicine)
- By 1900, rural hospitals established on or near plantations
- 1920: unions and plantations – better wages, housing, health care, maternal and child health and other welfare programs improved



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#### **HAWAII’S POPULATION MAKE-UP (American Community Survey 2006-2008 )**

Total Population = 1,280,273

Speak Language Other than English at Home = 296,402

Speak English Less than Very Well = 134,556

83% + Asian and 9%+ Hawaiian and Pacific Island Language Speakers

LEP Languages with 1,000 speakers or more:

1. Ilokano (27,077)
2. Tagalog (26,418)
3. Japanese (21,710)
4. Chinese – Mandarin/Cantonese (15,751)
5. Korean (11,397)
6. Spanish (7,384)
7. Vietnamese (5,060)
8. Other Pacific Islander – Chuukese/Marshallese (6,458)
9. Samoan (3,334)
10. Cebuano (2,137)
11. Hawaiian (1,292)



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### Hawai‘i Courts: Top Requested Languages (2012):

**Total = 4,945**

- |                      |                    |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Chuukese (1,365)  | 12. Pohnpeian (99) |
| 2. Marshallese (704) | 13. Cantonese (91) |
| 3. Ilokano (689)     | 14. Thai (45)      |
| 4. Spanish (409)     | 15. Russian (29)   |
| 5. Korean (348)      | 16. Kosraean (29)  |
| 6. Tagalog (253)     | 17. Laotian (23)   |
| 7. Vietnamese (203)  | 18. Cebuano (16)   |
| 8. Japanese (144)    | 19. Portuguese (7) |
| 9. Samoan (143)      | 20. Bengali (7)    |
| 10. Tongan (134)     | 21. Hawaiian (6)   |
| 11. Mandarin (106)   |                    |



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# Language Access – Early Beginnings

- Mid to late 1800s Hawaiian Kingdom literacy high in Hawaiian and English
- Circa 1900 Plantation influxes create point where only 5% were *native* English-speaking (mostly American)
- 1896 Palama Chapel (Settlement)
- Public Health Nurses in community and later BOH.



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# Impact of Federal laws

- 1964 Title VI of the Civil Rights Act
- **1974 Lau v. Nichols, SCOTUS**
- 1975 Title XVI PHS Act (Hill-Burton)
- **2000 Executive Order 13166**
- 2010 §1557 Patient Protection & ACA



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# Bilingual Health Education Program

- 1969 Health Education for Immigrants
- 1973 VISTA outreach for language access established on O‘ahu
- 1974 Statewide expansion
- 1976 Court challenge proposal to cut
- 1986 HRS 321-101 BHEA program in law
- 1992 (Lanakila) Easy Access Project link state and community services



*‘pioneers’ here today Lethu Thi Duong,  
Chio Yee Pun Ho, Pua Kaohelaulii and Tugalei Soa*



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# Hawai‘i’s Language Access Law

- Origins
- Movement
- Passage of the 2006 law: purposes
- Amendments in 2008, 2012 and 2013



Governor Lingle signed a bill to improve language access for immigrants with limited English proficiency and presented ceremonial copies to immigrant service providers and advocates.





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# Hawai‘i’s Language Access Law

- Origins were many
  - Interagency Council on Immigrant Services
  - Na Loio No Na Kanaka
  - Office of Community Services
  - Hawai‘i Civil Rights Commission+



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# Hawai‘i’s Language Access Law

- Movement included many
  - Unsung customers, clients, advocates, workers
  - Immigrant rights, domestic violence, bilingual workers
  - Ethnic community reps, service providers+



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# Hawai‘i’s Language Access Law

- Passage of the 2006 law: purposes
  - *Address the language access needs of Limited English proficient persons*
  - *Ensure meaningful access to services, programs and activities.*
- Title VI, EO 13166, history, other places
- Choosing to legislate, compromising
- Timing, commitment, need, personal histories



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# Hawai‘i’s Language Access Law

Amendments:

- 2008 – definitions and technical clarifications; increased Advisory Council membership from 12 to 16 (county representatives)
- 2012 – transferred the Office of Language Access from DLIR to DOH; added at-large member to Advisory Council
- 2013 – established the Language Access Resource Center and multilingual website project



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# The Office of Language Access

- Mission, vision and goals
- The Language Access Advisory Council
- Major activities and accomplishments



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# The Office of Language Access

- Provide oversight, central coordination and technical assistance to state and state-funded agencies
- Monitor state agencies for compliance
- Investigate and resolve language access complaints through informal methods
- Administer a statewide language access resource center
- Advised by a 17-member, statewide Language Access Advisory Council



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# Language access conferences

- 2008 – Laulima: Working Together to Ensure Language Access in Hawaii
- 2009 – Ho`opono: Plan Implementation and Promising Practices
- 2010 – Ho`omakaukau: Emergency Preparedness and Hawaii’s LEP Communities
- 2011 – Kokua: First Responders – Addressing Language Access Needs in Emergencies
- 2012 – Ka Unuhi: Translation – Maximizing Quality and Minimizing Costs
- 2013 – Ola Pono: Language Access in the Community Health Setting



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# Language access training

For agencies:

- Hawaii’s language access law
- Creating a language access plan
- Working with interpreters
- Translation of vital documents

For interpreters:

- Ethics of interpretation
- Basics of interpretation
- Interpretation skills and techniques
- Community interpretation





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### Other activities

- Language access law forums
- Community outreach
- Multilingual radio spots
- TV show (Island Insights), Olelo
- Quarterly newsletter
- Pay stub messages
- Consultations and presentations
- Complaints resolution (mostly informal; hospitals and private physicians)



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# Multilingual materials

- Multilingual “If You Need an Interpreter” poster (24 languages)
- Language identification and Emergency Card (20 languages, through Interagency Council on Immigrant Services and Citizen Corps, State Civil Defense Agency)
- OLA brochure (in print)
- Complaints process (coming)
- Website (coming)



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# Language access in health care

- Office of Minority Health National Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Standards
- Public Health Accreditation Board
- Joint Commission
- Commission on the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities
- Five Foundations for Healthy Generations
- Consolidating purchasing trend



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# Toward medical interpreter certification

- Lack of medical interpreters
- Use of community and informal interpreters
- The Bridging the Gap training
- National certification
- Act 217 – toward state medical interpreter certification?



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# Summary

- Language access in health has a long tradition in Hawaii
- As law and policy, is the product of a long struggle
- Being implemented by the Office of Language Access
- In the community health setting, implemented through language access plans, use of bilingual health workers and community interpreters
- Lack of medical interpreters
- Move toward state certification
- The challenge of commitment and resources



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***Mahalo Nui Loa!***

***E Mālama Pono!***

***Imua!***

