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Hawai'i Program Supporting Healthcare Worker Wellness Earns National Recognition for Best Practices

Local nonprofit Pu'ulu Lapa'au is among the first 10% nationwide to complete the Federation of State Physician Health Programs' national PEER™ review

HONOLULU, HI – hawaiiphp.org – Hawai'i's healthcare professionals and students now have access to a nationally validated process dedicated to their own health, wellness, and resiliency.

Pu'ulu Lapa'au—Hawai'i's nonprofit that promotes the health, well-being, and effectiveness of Hawai'i's healthcare professionals—has successfully completed the rigorous PEER™ review conducted by the Federation of State Physician Health Programs, Inc. (FSPHP). It is among the first 10% of Physician Health Programs (PHPs) nationwide, and only the fifth in the country to achieve this distinction.

FSPHP is the national membership association for state-led PHPs that coordinate the confidential detection, evaluation, treatment, and continuing care of licensed healthcare professionals suffering from burnout and stress, emotional or mental illness, addictions, and behavioral concerns. At a time when physician well-being is under unprecedented strain, the need for specialized, high-quality programs to address such conditions has never been more critical.

FSPHP's PEER™ Program stands for Performance Enhancement and Effectiveness Review (PEER™). The process scrutinized Pu'ulu Lapa'au against a comprehensive set of assessment criteria reflecting best practices of the nation's PHPs and other safety-sensitive professional health programs.

Pu'ulu Lapa'au founder Dr. William Haning said, "There was no certitude whatsoever as to the potential for success—or for that matter, any longevity developing out of this. To see Pu'ulu Lapa'au recognized as one of the nation's leading physician health programs is incredibly rewarding."

FSPHP Immediate Past President Michael Baron, MD, MPH, DFASAM, FAPA, praised Pu‘ulu Lapa‘au and the nation’s other four PHPs that successfully completed the PEER™ review, noting that their commitment to self-evaluation and improvement helps support the long-term viability of PHPs and the well-being of those they ultimately serve.

“These programs send a powerful message to physicians and other healthcare professionals: your health matters,” he said. “By continually strengthening their policies and procedures, programs such as Pu‘ulu Lapa‘au help ensure that those who care for others can safely get the care they need for themselves.”

“If we have healthcare providers who are truly healthy themselves, that’s huge,” said Pu‘ulu Lapa‘au Executive Director Geri Young, M.D. “Healthcare professionals are just as vulnerable to stress and burnout as anyone else—perhaps even more so. The PEER™ review will strengthen our ability to support Hawai‘i’s healthcare professionals and, ultimately, the patients they serve.”

Pu‘ulu Lapa‘au Medical Director Angela Gough, D.O., FASAM, said the PEER™ review validates the organization’s commitment to excellence.

“The process reinforces the credibility of our clinical decisions, strengthens our policies and procedures, and provides a roadmap for continued improvement. Most importantly, it demonstrates our commitment to Hawai‘i’s licensed healthcare professionals. We want them to know their own health is just as important as the health of their patients and we’re ready to walk alongside them with professionalism, confidentiality, and results.”



Photo Caption: The Federation of State Physician Health Programs, Inc.(FSPHP) presents Pu‘ulu Lapa‘au with a certificate acknowledging Pu‘ulu Lapa‘au’s successful completion of the PEER™ review. Pictured from left are FSPHP President Edwin Kim, MD, FAPA, MRO; Pu‘ulu Lapa‘au Executive Director Geri Young, M.D., Pu‘ulu Lapa‘au Medical Director Angela Gough, D.O., FASAM,

and FSPHP Immediate Past President Michael Baron, MD, MPH, DFASAM, FAPA. **Photo credit:** Ryan Stevenson.

About Pu‘ulu Lapa‘au:

Pu‘ulu Lapa‘au, the Hawai‘i Program for Healthcare Professionals, is Hawai‘i’s recognized Physician Health Programs (PHP). The organization promotes patient safety and care by improving the health, well-being, and effectiveness of Hawai‘i’s healthcare professionals. Through wellness initiatives,

confidential support, and advocacy Pu'ulu Lapa'au assists healthcare professionals experiencing substance use disorders, mental or physical illness, work-life imbalance, and behavioral concerns.

Pu'ulu Lapa'au seeks recovery and the restoration of healthcare professionals to their roles. It helps determine the fitness of healthcare professionals to practice and re-enter practice after treatment.

For more information, go to www.hawaiiiphp.org.

About FSPHP:

The FSPHP evolved over 35 years ago from initiatives taken by the American Medical Association, the Federation of State Medical Boards, and state medical societies. PHPs serve as a safe, confidential resource for the profession, focusing on outreach, education, and health monitoring for physicians and healthcare professionals at risk for impairment. Today, nearly every state has developed a PHP that operates within the parameters of state regulation and legislation.

The FSPHP is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) professional membership association with elected officers and an elected Board of Directors. FSPHP has the largest membership in history, with 50 State Physician Health Program Members and 325 total members of the association. More information about FSPHP can be found here: www.fsphp.org or by watching the linked [YouTube video](#).