



Annual Meeting Speakers Bios

Dr. Michele Lani Bray - Online RN to BS Program Director, Assistant Professor, and nurse educator with the UH Manoa Nancy Atmospera-Walch School of Nursing. Dr. Bray has continued to advance public health in Hawaii with unwavering commitment for more than 30 years. She is the director of the Online RN to BS program that provides registered nurses with the opportunity to attain a bachelor's degree and further their professional growth. She also teaches in the Master of Science Online Advanced Population Health Nursing program, sharing her expertise and passion for public health with a new generation of nurse leaders. Bray has been exceptionally committed to raising awareness among nurses regarding the growing importance of attaining knowledge and skills in public/population health to address major societal trends impacting health. She believes in the importance of preparing nurses for future public health challenges, such as climate change adaptation, disaster readiness, and the sustainability of our 'aina."

Dr. Deborah Goebert - Professor at the University of Hawaii, John A. Burns School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry and Office of Public Health Studies is an inaugural member of the Prevent Suicide Hawaii Task Force and is the current Co-Chair. She is the Co-Director of Hawaii's Caring Systems Initiative for Youth Suicide Prevention and the Community Engagement and Outreach Core Director for the Center for Pacific Innovation, Knowledge and Opportunity. Her research and scholarly work center on the social-cultural determinants of mental health and well-being by identifying disparities and implementing culturally-grounded interventions through collaborative partnerships. She has a passion public health, enjoys spending time outdoors, and loves to laugh. Dr. Goebert is a past Hawaii Public Health Association board president from 1996-1997.

Dr. Christina Higa - Co-director of the Pacific Basin Telehealth Resource Center (PBTRC) and as associate director of the Telecommunications and Social Informatics (TASI) Research Program. She is also an associate faculty specialist at the College of Social Sciences and an adjunct assistant professor in the Department of Medicine at the John A. Burns School of Medicine, University of Hawai'i at Manoa. Her responsibilities encompass managing various intergovernmental cooperative agreements for health information technology and social informatics research projects in Hawai'i and the Pacific Islands. Dr. Higa's research interests center around health equity, digital healthcare, policy, and technical innovations aimed at enhancing access to quality healthcare for rural and underserved communities. She holds an interdisciplinary PhD in Communication Information Sciences from the University of Hawai'i at Manoa.

Dr. Tonya Lowery St. John - Principal Investigator of Hawai'i Health Data Warehouse (HHDW) in the Thompson School of Social Work & Public Health at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Dr. Lowery St. John holds a Masters in Public Health from the University of Connecticut and a PhD in Epidemiology from the University of Hawai'i. She has extensive work experience with public health surveillance data and a passion for making that data accessible and available to the public. She is also Co-Editor of the Hawai'i Journal of Health & Social Welfare.