

Hawaii's NPHW Celebration on April 7, 2022 Featured Speakers Bios



Diana Felton, MD is the state toxicologist for the Hawaii Department of Health's Hazard Evaluation and Emergency Response (HEER) Office. The HEER Office provides leadership, support, and partnership in preventing, planning for, responding to, and enforcing environmental laws relating to releases or threats of releases of hazardous substances. As the toxicologist, Dr. Felton is responsible for evaluating potential or current human health effects from chemical contamination and hazardous substances in Hawaii. This includes a wide array of hazards from childhood lead poisoning, volcanic emissions, industrial waste, contaminants in fish such as mercury, PCBs, and PFAS, and many others. She is actively involved in risk communication, hazard evaluation, and scientific studies to identify and mitigate potential hazards. Dr. Felton works with many federal, state and community partners on environmental health issues and currently serves on the EPA's Children's Health Protection Advisory Committee and represents Hawaii as the State Environmental Health Director for the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials. She also serves as the Regional Consultant for Hawaii to the Region 9 Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit (PEHSU). Dr. Felton also has a strong interest in the intersection of climate change and health including how environmental impacts from climate change will affect human health and disease. Dr. Felton graduated from the University of California, Berkeley and attended medical school at the University of California, Davis. Emergency Medicine Residency was done at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, MA and Toxicology Fellowship at the Harvard Medical Toxicology Program. She spent many years working as an ER physician and toxicologist in Massachusetts and Hawaii before transitioning to state government work in 2018.



Rie Kuhaulua, PsyD, MPH is the Research and Development Specialist at the Hawaii Public Health Institute. Rie joined HIPHI in 2018 and coordinates recruitment and onboarding for HIPHI's interns and volunteers, as well as conducting assessments and writing projects. She has 20 years of experience in public health and mental health in the US and Pacific Islands. Rie holds a Master of Public Health (MPH) from the University of Hawai'i and a Doctorate of Psychology (PsyD) from Hawai'i School of Professional Psychology.

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Michelle Tagorda-Kama, MPH is a faculty junior specialist with the Office of Public Health Studies Thompson School of Social Work and Public Health at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. She works primarily as an academic advisor supporting prospective and current public health students. Michelle is a long-time HPHA board member, starting her journey as a student representative board member and continuing to her current role on the HPHA Executive Committee.



Karen Corona-Perez is a senior at Hawaii Pacific University, studying Public Health. Her goals are to be able to improve the lives of individuals on a macro level by optimizing all of the social determinants that directly affect the health of a society. She plans to pursue her Master's Degree in Public Health upon graduation in Spring 2022. During her last semester of undergrad, she has been interning as a student fellow for HPHA. As the Spring fellow, she has had the opportunity to be on the planning committee for HPHA's National Public Health Week. She has found the experience to be rewarding while connecting and receiving a positive influence from everyone at HPHA. She looks forward to the remainder of her time with HPHA knowing she will carry these experiences with her throughout her studies and future careers.