



INSIDE IM

Greetings from the UH Department of Medicine!



The 2025 Internal Giving Campaign highlighted the many ways generosity supports JABSOM, especially here in the Department of Medicine. During Thanksgiving week, Dr. Kuwada brought smiles to our residents, faculty, and staff at the Queen's and Kuakini Medical Centers with personal Dippin' Dots deliveries, adding a touch of joy and celebration to their hard work.

Support for the Department of Medicine Enhancement Account and the Elizabeth K. Tam, MD, Memorial Fund help make these moments possible. Your support fuels programs and resources that elevate education, enhance learning spaces, and foster faculty and trainee development, enriching the experience of our internal medicine learners.

To everyone who chose to give: thank you so much for your support! Your generosity reflects the spirit of mālama and helps sustain a community where everyone feels supported, connected, and valued.



FOLLOW US ON INSTA @UHDEPTMED

Empowering the next generation of Internal Medicine physicians through excellence in education, research, and patient care. 





ALOHA AND A HUI HOU, DR. RALPH SHOHET

Congratulations and best wishes to Dr. Ralph Shohet, Professor of Medicine and Director of the Cardiovascular Center for Research (CCR), as he retires after 20 years of excellence and dedication to the missions of the John A. Burns School of Medicine!

As Director, he established the CCR as an NIH-funded Center of Biomedical Research Excellence (COBRE). He secured the initial funding and has led the renewal of the NIH T32 Training Grant, now on its third cycle. His pivotal role in developing the UH Cardiovascular Fellowship Program further cements his lasting influence and legacy on cardiovascular research and training.

We owe Dr. Shohet a debt of gratitude, and in some cases, careers, for all he has brought and developed at JABSOM and our teaching hospitals.

HO'OMAIKA'I, DR. ELLIOT KALAUAWA!

On December 6, 2025, Whitman College honored Dr. Kalauawa as its Alumni of Merit, the highest honor awarded by its alumni association, celebrating his 39 years leading Waikīkī Health's care for underserved communities, 41 years mentoring JABSOM students, and transformative work in homeless healthcare and HIV/AIDS treatment. Congratulations, Dr. Kalauawa, on this well-deserved recognition of a lifetime dedicated to healing and service!



FELLOWSHIP MATCH DAY

Congratulations to our incoming fellows who will be joining us in AY 2026-2027! We are pleased to welcome you, and look forward to working together as you advance your training and careers!

CVD Fellows



Michael Meno, MD



Zachary Pang, MD



Charlotte Park, DO



Edward Shin, MD

GI Fellows



Jeffrey Nguyen, MD



Haruki Sawada, PhD, MD

MAHALO TO OUR CLINICIAN-EDUCATORS

We extend our sincere thanks to the clinician-educators within the Department of Medicine for their dedication to medical education. Over the past six months, these trainees and junior faculty have generously taught clinical skills to MS1 and MS2 students in small-group settings, demonstrating a strong commitment to teaching and mentorship in addition to their substantial clinical responsibilities.

- Kevin Benavente, DO
- Nicole Chong, MD
- Kelsey Kwong, MD
- Kevin Lee, MD
- Azim Merchant, MD
- Todd Nagamine, DO
- Uzoagu Okonkwo, MD, PhD
- Kalani Ruiz, MD
- Parthav Shah, MD
- Arvin Jeremy Tan, MD

PHYSICIAN CAREER FAIR

HRP hosted a Physician Career Fair at the Blaisdell on November 19, 2025. The goal of the Physician Career Pathways event is to attract qualified, passionate physicians to live and work in Hawai'i, helping meet the health care needs of communities across the state.

Our fellows and admin, alongside Dr. Kuwada, featured our CVD and GI fellowship training programs to medical students, residents, and fellows in attendance. They also introduced the Hematology/Oncology fellowship, anticipated start date AY27-28, with applications opening in August 2026 through ERAs!



FEATURING OUR HMSA CLI AWARDEES

Congratulations to the winners of the 3rd Annual HMSA Center for Learning Innovations (CLI) Creative Pedagogy Awards! Housed within the JABSOM Office of Medical Education, the HMSA CLI supports innovative, sustainable approaches to health professions education, with each awarded team receiving up to \$3,000 to advance projects benefiting learners across JABSOM!

ESCAPING THE ICU



“Escaping the ICU: Gamification-Based Learning Through an Escape Room for Critical Care Education,” led by Dr. Brent Matsuda and PGY-3 Dr. Christian Capirig, turns critical care training into an immersive, hands-on challenge where interns work together under pressure to apply core ICU concepts. By using gamification, the pilot makes learning interactive, engaging, and memorable. Turning ICU concepts into an exciting, immersive learning experience for our interns.



Dr. Dee-Ann Carpenter (left) and Dr. Erlaine Bello (right)

MANA KAUKA WAHINE

On May 13, 2025, the Elizabeth “Liz” Keali‘ikua‘aina Tam, MD Memorial Award was presented to Dr. Erlaine Bello and Dr. Dee-Ann Carpenter in recognition of their embodiment of Dr. Tam’s mission and legacy. They have been selected as the group’s Spring honorees.

Mana Kauka Wahine is a group piloted by Dr. Nani Morgan, Dr. Dee-Ann Carpenter, Dr. Elizabeth Koehler, Dr. Florence Kan, Dr. Charlotte Park (PGY3), Dr. Chika Takarada (PGY2), Dr. Awapuhi Lee (PGY1), Helen Victor, and Liana Garcia that celebrates and supports women in medicine through connection, mentorship, and shared leadership. Their project, “Mana Wahine: A Strengths-Based Approach to Advancing Gender Equity within the Department of Medicine,” highlights the group’s commitment to fostering an inclusive environment that uplifts women physicians, trainees, and staff across the department.

[Click here to see the details on the upcoming Spring Event on February 7, and RSVP by January 30!](#)

MAHALO, DR. MARK GRATAN: SUPPORTING THE ELIZABETH TAM MEDICINE ACADEMY (ETMA)



We are deeply grateful for the support of Dr. Mark Grattan, husband of the late Dr. Elizabeth Tam, whose generous gift will be used to establish the Elizabeth Tam Medicine Academy (ETMA). This initiative honors Dr. Tam's legacy as a beloved Department Chair and her enduring commitment to faculty mentorship and medical education in Hawai'i.

ETMA will provide a structured program for faculty professional development, reflecting Dr. Tam's commitment to cultivating excellence in teaching, mentorship, and lifelong learning. Dr. Brent Matsuda will be the first faculty member to participate in this process, helping to build a structured and enduring academy that pays tribute to Dr. Tam and reflects our Department's missions.

We are profoundly thankful for Dr. Grattan's generosity and his dedication to celebrating Dr. Tam's legacy.

WELCOME TO THE DEPT

We are truly fortunate and thankful for our outstanding clinical faculty.
We are pleased to introduce our newest additions:

Clinical Professor:

Mehmet Cilingirolu, MD - Wilcox, Cardiology

Clinical Assistant Professors:

Darren DuGas, MD - Hawaii Pacific Neuroscience, Neurology

Michiko Inaba, MD - Kaiser Mapunapuna, Rheumatology

Ashlee Nekoba, MD - Queen's POB I, Primary Care

James O'Brien, MD - HPH Straub, Gastroenterology

Sean Shirley, MD - Queen's POB II, Pulmonary

Keli Tahara, MD - HPH Pali Momi, Neurology

David Titus, MD - Kuakini, Hospital Medicine

Zao Zhang, MD - Queen's Punchbowl, Hospital Medicine

Thank you for volunteering to support JABSOM's mission!

Meet Our New Program Specialists!



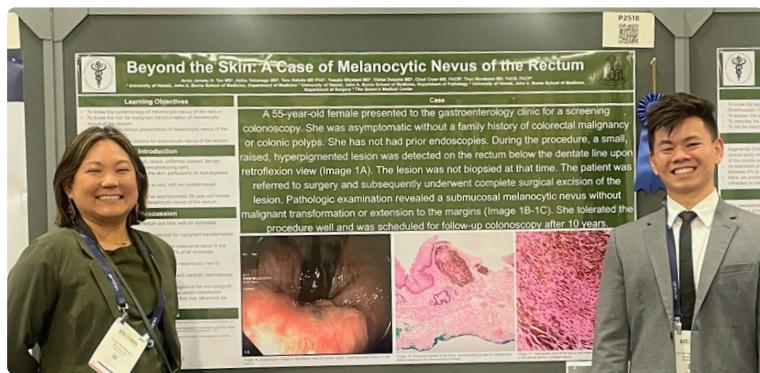
Kristin Liana Garcia



Maria Inong

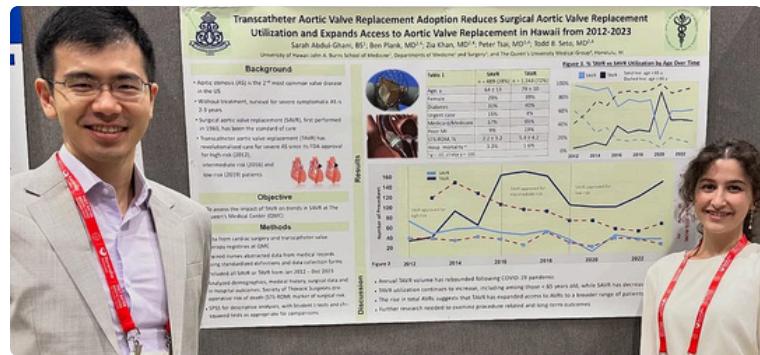
RESEARCH ROUNDUP

Highlighting research from our learners and faculty – representing us nationally!



Dr. Traci Murakami and Dr. Arvin Jeremy Tan received the **Presidential Poster Award** for their outstanding research presented at the 2025 American College of Gastroenterology (ACG) Annual Meeting in Phoenix, Arizona.

*Read their award-winning project:
[Beyond the Skin: A Case of Melanocytic Nevus of the Rectum](#)*



Dr. Yu-Chiang “Jack” Wang (PGY-2), and Sarah Abdul-Ghani (MS3) presented their research at the 2025 American Heart Association (AHA) Scientific Sessions in New Orleans, Louisiana.

*Read Sarah’s abstract here:
[Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement Adoption Reduces Surgical Aortic Valve Replacement Utilization and Expands Access to Aortic Valve Replacement in Hawaii from 2012–2023](#)*

*Read Dr. Wang’s abstract here:
[Beyond the Octogenarian Threshold: A Nationwide, Multicenter Three-Year Analysis of Post-Ablation Safety Outcomes in Elderly Atrial Fibrillation Patients](#)*

LOOKING FOR RESEARCH SUPPORT?

Our department helps researchers, students, and residents connect and collaborate through mentorship and research support. We help you succeed through:

- **Our Research Review Committee.** Our committee supports faculty and residents in developing and strengthening research projects. Early review helps refine your scientific question, clarify specific aims, guide study design, and streamline IRB submissions.
- **Research Mentorship Collaboration.** Faculty and staff are invited to volunteer as mentors to engage with students or residents on current projects, creating meaningful learning experiences and partnerships.
- **Biostatistical Analysis Support.** We offer comprehensive assistance with data analysis, including IRB and data management, TriNetX research, and statistical analyses.

[View Our Research Resources and Support on our website here!](#)

[Want to Volunteer as a Research Mentor? Fill out our form here!](#)

SAVE THE DATES

JANUARY GRAND ROUNDS

[Click here for more details](#)

- **Jan 6**
 - Roy Esaki, MD - *Applications and Considerations of Clinical A.I. Technologies*
- **Jan 13 - JABSOM OME GR**
 - Shandhini Raidoo, MD & Paris Stowers, MD - *TBA*
- **Jan 20**
 - Alan Morita, RN, BSN & Maegan Ruggles, Esq - *Medical Negligence (or Malpractice); What you Need to Know*
- **Jan 27**
 - Dawn Taniguchi, MD, MPH and Bryan Brown, MD - *Talk To Their Heart: A Hard Look at Medical Interpretation in Hawaii and Beyond*

FEB 7 - MANA KAUKA WAHINE SPRING EVENT

HOLIDAYS

- **Jan 1 - New Year's Day**
- **Jan 19 - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**
- **Feb 16 - Presidents' Day**
- **March 26 - Prince Kuhio Day**

HAVE A HAPPY AND HEALTHY NEW YEAR!



Dr. Morita and MS4s, taken after the 2025 Honolulu Marathon dinner at Happy Days Chinese Restaurant in Kaimuki. From left to right: Sylvia Nguyen, Jasmine Padamada, Maya Nishida, Dr. Aaron Morita, and Duke Escobar.



Dr. Bruce Soll and family enjoying their Thanksgiving gifts from Egypt!



"Tis the season to paws and smile!" - Trio & DOM Team



"Have yourself a furry little Xmas" - Oliver (courtesy of Dr. Ryo Kato)

WANT TO BE FEATURED?

Want to be featured in next quarter's eNewsletter?

Please direct your exciting, newsworthy updates to the *Inside IM* team at uhdomed@hawaii.edu.

We're eager to hear from you!