Rethinking Science and Redefining Community:
The PILI ‘Ohana Project

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Partnership for Improving Lifestyle Intervention (PILI) ‘Ohana Project

- A community-based participatory research (CBPR) project aimed at eliminating obesity disparities in Hawai‘i
  - NCMHD funded (R24 MD001660)
Our Communities in Hawai‘i

- Ke Ola Mamo Native Hawaiian Healthcare System
- Kalihi Pālama Health Center
- Hawai‘i Maoli – Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs
- Kokua Kalihi Valley Family Comprehensive Services
- Kula no Nā Po‘e Hawai‘i
- Department of Native Hawaiian Health
Rethinking Science

• **Efficacy vs. effectiveness intervention studies**
  • What should be the “gold standard” in CBPR involving intervention testing?

• **Scientist as consultant vs. primary investigator**

• **Expanding scientific paradigms to fit the socio-economic and socio-cultural realities of health disparate populations**
  • Social disparities → health disparities
Redefining Community

- Communities are dynamic, heterogeneous entities
  - Challenges the one-size fits all public health paradigm

- Community leaders as investigators vs. informants

- Building community infrastructure from the inside out
  - Prevention is community-based and -led

- Community partnerships make science practical and real
  - Voice of science for policy change
What is the role of community-campus partnerships in eliminating health disparities?

- The role is to (re)think and (re)define traditional roles & paradigms.
  - Science is not merely about experimentations but also real-world applications
  - Community partners are not passive beneficiaries of science but active contributors
  - Science doesn’t inform policy, people do
Achieving Social Justice
How do we bridge the advances in science with community practice and promotion of health disparities policy?

**CBPR**
- Focus on prevention
- Translational research
- Best Practice models
- Building sustainable infrastructure
- Developing community capacity
- Funding that matches the reality of CBPR
Mahalo nui (Thank you)

- National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities
- Community partners
  - Hawai‘i Maoli – Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs (PIs: Henry Gomes, Charlie Rose)
  - Kalihi-Palama Health Center (PI: Anne Leake)
  - Ke Ola Mamo, Native Hawaiian Health Care System (PI: Donna Palakiko)
  - Kokua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Family Services (PI: Sheryl Yoshimura)
  - Kula O Nā Po‘e Hawai‘i (PI: Puni Kekauoha)