



## Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Youth Health and Fitness Day

Event Date: April 2, 2011

Location/Venue: Los Angeles, California, UCLA Campus (tentative)

Host: The White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders/The President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (Lead Commissioners: Hines Ward, Sefa Aina, and Kamuela Enos) and California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs (Lead Commissioner: Tana Lepule)

Objective: The **President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders** (the Commission) has prioritized addressing the alarming and increasing rate of **overweight and obesity plaguing Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) communities** as foremost in its outreach efforts.

Obesity and diabetes have been a growing concern in the United States for a number of years and a catalyst for the First Lady's *Let's Move!* campaign. This issue is particularly dire in the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) communities.

In a report released by the Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum, data indicate roughly **1 out of 5 NHPI high school youth (20.4%) are obese**, one of the highest percentages among all racial groups in the United States; and **1 out of 3 NHPI high school youth (33.5%) are likely to be overweight or obese**.

Commissioner Hines Ward of the Pittsburgh Steelers is leading this effort as an advocate for the NFL's *Play 60* campaign, which encourages youth to be physically active for at least 60 minutes per day. Joining Commissioner Ward are fellow Commissioners, Sefa Aina and Kamuela Enos, both of whom are active members of the NHPI community in California and Hawaii respectively. With the support of the White House Initiative staff led by Executive Director Kiran Ahuja, the issue of childhood obesity in the NHPI community is receiving the necessary attention and energy needed to combat it.

Event Format: On April 2, 2011 at the UCLA campus (tentative), the Commission will host **a half-day "Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Health and Fitness Day"** featuring exercise, healthy foods, and routine health check-ups. In line with the First Lady's *Let's Move!* campaign message, the **program will include the following components to promote healthy eating and physical activity:**

- Speakers and Presentations (A program that will include the Commissioners as well as leaders and celebrities in the NHPI community who will deliver key messages.)
- Physical Activity Stations (Run by current NHPI collegiate athletes.)
- Health Village (NHPI community-based health advocates and local Federally Qualified Health



Clinics serving the highest concentrations of NHPI.)

- Diet and Healthy Food Village (We intend on inviting dieticians to help encourage healthy food choices, and chefs who know how to make cultural dishes more health-conscious.)

This event will target the NHPI communities in Southern California, home to the largest population of NHPIs after Hawaii. The Commission will coordinate outreach efforts with NHPI churches and other cultural/community centers to bring their families and friends however, the focus for the day will be the NHPI youth and combating childhood obesity.

Multi-Media NHPI Youth Collaborative Potential: This event will generate an opportunity for collaboration with one of the nation's premiere digital media programs - Hawai'i based **Waianae High School's Searider Productions** (<http://www.seariderproductions.com>). Searider Productions serves one of the largest concentrations of Native Hawaiians in the world, and, with support from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, utilize digital media to increase academic proficiencies in one of Hawai'i's most at-risk communities. Over the course of its 18 years of existence, Searider has grown into a national media powerhouse, from winning the Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award in 2008, to consistently taking top honors at the prestigious Student Television Network annual challenge. Many of Searider's most successful work have focused on issues facing the Hawaiian community, including award winning shorts on childhood obesity.

## **Background**

*"Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) populations are at much greater risk than other Americans for inactivity-related diseases, including obesity, cardiovascular disease, non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus, and some cancers. Thus, it is a matter of concern that NHPIs are typically found to be less active than their White counterparts, and a large proportion of NHPIs do not meet current physical activity recommendations."*

- According to the U.S. Census 2000 data, there are approximately 1.1 million NHPI people or 0.4% of the total population in the United States. Although NHPIs are found in every state, they are most concentrated in the states of Hawai'i, California, and Utah. **Southern California is home to more than half of all NHPI communities living in California.**
- According to the World Health Organization, **three of the top ten obese nations in the world are from the Pacific Islands. In American Samoa 93.5% of the population is obese**, and this trend has followed the community into the continental U.S.
- **As studies have shown, NHPI's have seen both their traditional diets, and their traditional lifestyles altered by Westernization.** Coming from a subsistence culture/lifestyle to a more sedentary one has had disastrous effects on the health of the NHPI community. Within urban cities, specifically in places like Los Angeles, CA, cheap-calories, lack of green spaces, and under-funded afterschool/extracurricular sports activities have only encouraged this problem.