John A. Burns School of Medicine • University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

For the past five decades, the family of physicians, instructors, administrators, and students of the John A. Burns School of Medicine have displayed unsurpassed dedication in pursuing their unique vision of ALOHA: Attaining Lasting Optimal Health for All.
Aloha!

We are proud that the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) has kept its promise to the community to develop a school of medicine that is a top-notch educational institution and first-rate research enterprise.

The pages that follow represent a small snapshot of some of the milestones along the path travelled by members of the JABSOM ‘ohana toward fulfillment of Governor John A. Burns’ dream to make Hawai‘i a better place to live.

Spanning the past 50 years, JABSOM faculty, administrators, and students have displayed a tireless work ethic, a commitment to excellence, and remarkable care and compassion in their quest to ensure the health of all Hawai‘i’s people.

With a brief glimpse here in the rearview mirror, our eyes are focused now on the road ahead, the work still to be done and the exciting discoveries before us. The best is yet to be.

I mau JABSOM!

JERRIS R. HEDGES, MD, MS, MMM
Professor and Dean
Barry and Virginia Weinman Endowed Chair
John A. Burns School of Medicine
Walking the Ward
Hands On and Hope

It’s a bit before 10 a.m. on a sunny Wednesday morning in Honolulu. Inside Kapi‘olani Medical Center for Women and Children (KMCWC), the elevator doors slide open onto the second floor, and 10-year-old Kala Peter of Ewa Beach rolls out into the halls of the pediatrics ward.

Kala is in a wheelchair; his right leg raised. Kala’s mom Kainani pushes him down to the procedure room, where Kala is scheduled to get the dressings changed on a wound on his leg.

It’s a trip that Kala and his mom and dad have made many times before. Kala hurt his right knee a few months earlier. A visit to the doctor brought some difficult news.

“He was diagnosed with osteosarcoma, bone cancer,” his mom Kainani says. “They told us it’s about an eight-month treatment with chemo, then surgeries. So far he’s had two major surgeries.”

“Today is one of the best days we’ve had,” Dr. Dilcher says. “Prior to my becoming a pediatrician, I thought of kids with cancer as such tragic figures, sad stories. But working with the kids, their families, and the doctors here, I’ve learned that kids are so strong.”

“Working with Kala has truly been career-changing for me. The impact he’s had on my life is motivation every day to be the best that I can be in the medical profession.”

—Dr. Kendra Dilcher

After ‘best friends’ Kala Peter and Dr. Kendra Dilcher say their farewells for the morning, Dr. Dilcher writes some notes about the day’s visit, and the healing progress of the post-surgery wound on Kala’s leg.

“Working with Kala has truly been career-changing for me,” Dr. Dilcher says. “The impact he’s had on my life is motivation every day to be the best that I can be in the medical profession.”

They’re formed in medical facilities throughout the Islands every day.

The friendships are formed in the hospitals of the Honolulu medical community. They’re formed in hospitals and health clinics on the neighbor islands. And they’re formed in medical facilities throughout the Pacific, stretching across Micronesia, Melanesia, and Polynesia.

For the past five decades, residents of all ages throughout the state of Hawai‘i and beyond have come to rely on graduates of the John A. Burns School of Medicine for their health care.

Their patients have come to recognize that this dedicated collection of physicians and health professionals from JABSOM cares deeply and passionately about those whom they treat and serve.

From left: Some of the incoming MD Residents at an orientation reception in 2014 in Kakaako; Kala Peter, Kendra Dilcher; MD and third-year MD student Beth Nakasone at Kapi‘olani Medical Center; Dr. Kendra Dilcher (right) with Cast, Michelle Lee, MD on the day they graduated from JABSOM in 2014.
The Dream Takes Shape: Modest Beginnings

While the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) saw its formally sanctioned beginnings in 1965, the notion of advanced studies toward a medical degree had been germinating in Hawai‘i for more than a decade prior.

After World War II, the U.S. territory which was then Hawai‘i’s training ground for social and economic transformation, as veterans returned to the Islands. Dr. Benjamin Young, former dean of students; Governor John Burns, remembers his father’s words echoing in 1960 as an organized research unit. Dr. Terence Rogers, named director of PBRC, and would recruit Dr. Windsor Cutting to be dean of the new school.

In 1962, two doctors from the medical school at UCLA, Robert Tschirgi and Richard Lockwood, were retained to prepare a report on the future of medical education in Hawai‘i. The resulting Tschirgi-Lockwood report recommended establishing a hybrid six-year Biomedical Sciences Master’s program. It would combine four years of undergraduate work, including premedical studies, with two additional years of medical education, including clinical exposure.

Early in the 1960’s, a host of elements would highlight the value and importance of a medical school in Hawai‘i. The first major step was the establishment of PBRC in 1960 as an organized research unit. Dr. Terence Rogers became the director of PBRC, and would soon recruit Dr. Windsor Cutting to be dean of the new school.

In 1965, Kevin Bunnell, a representative of the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education (WICHE), visited the Island and recommended a study for the feasibility of a two-year medical school program. Such a program would feed medical students from Hawai‘i to existing four-year schools on the mainland where the students would complete their training.

Later that same year, the university’s School of Public Health founding dean Richard K.C. Lee was named director of public health and medical activities, with one primary goal of transforming the public health school into a biomedical program.

Discussions were undertaken to amalgamate the university’s departments of microbiology, biochemistry, and biophysics, genetics, physiology and pharmacology into one school of basic medical sciences, with plans to add essential departments of medicine, anatomy, and pathology.

And in 1963, two doctors from the medical school at UCLA, Robert Tschirgi and Richard Lockwood, were retained to prepare a report on the future of medical education in Hawai‘i. The resulting Tschirgi-Lockwood report recommended establishing a hybrid six-year Biomedical Sciences Master’s program. It would combine four years of undergraduate work, including premedical studies, with two additional years of medical education, including clinical exposure.

Biomedical Sciences Building at UH Mānoa campus; UH Mānoa campus in the 1960s; Dr. Keōkukai Blaisdell (left), first dean of medicine and Dr. Benjamin Young, former dean of students; Governor John Burns (right), with President Lyndon Johnson and his wife Lady Bird, outside the East-West Center in the 1960s; Dr. Terence Rogers.

“The returning veterans—and John Burns—wanted to make sure that the next generations in Hawai‘i did have opportunities. That was the early vision for the medical school.”

—Dr. Benjamin Young
Medical Education Comes to Hawai‘i

With Gov. John A. Burns’ powerful and persuasive support, Hawai‘i’s two-year medical school program became a reality by virtue of legislative sanction in 1965. Windsor C. Cutting, a pharmacologist and former dean of the Stanford Medical School, took the reins as Hawai‘i’s first medical school dean. Terence Rogers, the previous director of PBRC, became associate dean under Cutting.

Rogers would ultimately take the reins as dean following Cutting’s death in 1972. Both men left indelible marks on the shape and direction of medical education in Hawai‘i.

Dr. Benjamin Young recalls much about Dean Cutting that recommended him as the ideal steward for Hawai‘i’s budding medical education. Above all, Dr. Young recalls Dr. Cutting as a man who put patient care and the quest for medical knowledge at the forefront.

“It was back when I was a resident here, at Le‘ahi Hospital,” Dr. Young recalls. “I was walking out of the hospital one day, and Dr. Cutting calls to me. Oh, boy! Here was the dean of the medical school calling me over. I was nobody, just a lowly resident. I was trembling with fear!”

Dr. Young wondered: had he committed some sort of unintentional transgression during his residency, for which he would be now held accountable in the eyes of the dean?

Hardly.

Instead, Dr. Cutting had spotted a teachable moment at hand.

“He said to me, ‘You see that man over there?’” Dr. Young remembers. “I looked across the street, and there was a man with a shuffling gait, tremors in his hands. And Dean Cutting wanted to take the time to explain to me the psychopharmacology of the man’s condition, and the findings of the day about dopamine and Parkinson’s disease.”

Dr. Cutting left a lasting impression on young students, faculty recruits, and state officials as he built the young medical school. Meanwhile, his colleague, assistant dean Terence “Terry” Rogers had been doing very much the same thing, in every way imaginable.

“Terry was a powerful force,” recalls Dr. Rayner. “Terry Rogers was a powerful human being, and he knew people. And the people he knew were very helpful.”

Thanks to the dedication of visionary men like Gov. John A. Burns, Dr. Windsor Cutting, Dr. Terry Rogers, and their colleagues, the institution that emerged around them was an ambitious young medical school with dreams of greatness.

Dr. Rayner’s career with the medical school at the University of Hawai‘i would span 50 full years, until his retirement in December of 2014. But even in the earliest going, Dr. Rayner never had a moment’s doubt about the school’s prospects looking forward.

“I was totally confident it was going to work,” Dr. Rayner recalls. “Terry Rogers was a powerful human being, and he knew people. And the people he knew were very helpful.”

In 1996, Dr. Sherrill Hammar was appointed interim dean.

1998
Researcher Ryuzo Yanagimachi discovers the Hemanolau Technique for cloning mice

1999
Edwin Cadman becomes dean

2005
• T. Samuel Shomaker is appointed interim dean
  • Medical Education and Bioscience Research buildings open in Kaka‘ako
  • HOME Project is established to improve access to health care for the homeless

2006
Gary Ostrander is appointed interim dean

2008
Jenris Hedges becomes dean

2013
JABSOM begins greater collaboration with UH Cancer Center when it relocates to Kaka‘ako

2015
JABSOM is named #19 in the nation among primary care medical schools by US News & World Report

THE JOHN A. BURNS SCHOOL OF MEDICINE 50 YEARS OF HEALING IN HAWAI‘I
A quiet man from Yale came to the John A. Burns School of Medicine in 1999, to chase what at the time seemed an almost impossible dream.

Looking forward, new medical school dean Dr. Ed Cadman saw a new home for the medical school, with the very best teaching facilities available for medical education, and an ambitious biomedical research complex. “People thought he was nuts,” Dr. Benjamin Young confesses.

The obstacles Dean Cadman faced at the outset of his tenure were monumental. The university as a whole was struggling financially. And though the medical school at Manoa had gained acclaim for its problem-based learning curriculum, many at the school knew it needed a serious research component to gain national respect.

Undaunted, Dr. Cadman came in with the expectation that adding a research arm at the medical school would provide a catalyst for Hawai‘i’s biotech industry. And Dr. Cadman still made sure his voice was heard.

“I pointed down to the space toward the beach in Kaka‘ako and said, ‘Doc, that’s where your new medical school will be.’” — Governor Ben Cayetano

There was of course still the matter of paying for the new undertaking. And it was only through an odd, ironic sort of serendipity that the funding was found.

“During my administration we managed to get a big settlement from the tobacco companies, compensating Hawai‘i for taxpayer money spent on tobacco-related diseases,” Cayetano says.

The agreement with tobacco companies came to be known as the Master Settlement Agreement, a windfall in funds from ‘big tobacco’ for 46 states across the United States.

Thanks to money from the Master Settlement Agreement, ground was broken for the new campus at Kaka‘ako in October of 2002, and the facility opened its doors to students and researchers in the spring of 2005.

The $150 million complex includes the Education/Administration Building and the Biosciences Building. The complex incorporates energy efficiencies in its office and laboratories by adopting the U.S. Green Building Council’s (USGBC) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Rating System.

Then, borrowing from the tobacco settlement model that helped fund the initial phase of the new campus, in 2013 the University of Hawai‘i Cancer Center also opened its doors at Kaka‘ako. The six-story, 150,000 square-foot building was funded by revenue bonds backed by a portion of the state tax revenue on the sale of cigarettes.

John A. Burns School of Medicine Dean Dr. Jerriis Hedges says the proximity of facilities at Kaka‘ako is a huge boon.

“The opportunity for the cancer center and the medical school to work more closely around building strong, innovative cancer treatment programs is just now beginning to come together,” Dr. Hedges says. “I’m excited by that.”

The JABSOM complex under construction at Kaka‘ako in 2003; the medical school and University of Hawai‘i Cancer Center today (Photo: Andrea Brizzi); Dr. Ed Cadman in 2000; View from University of Hawai‘i Cancer Center; Governor Benjamin Cayetano; JABSOM Medical Education Building.
Among the earliest strategic building blocks for a four-year medical school at the University of Hawai‘i was a 1970 report generated at the request of then-university president Harlan Cleveland. The report, prepared by a distinguished four-member team of medical experts from the mainland, concluded that rather than building the new medical school around a separate, dedicated university hospital (as was the case with many top mainland medical schools), the University of Hawai‘i would be well-served by making “a multi-hospital clinical teaching system…the option of choice.”

“The new model put the community hospitals in close touch with medical education,” former JABSOM dean of students Dr. Benjamin Young says. “Where you have them as stakeholders in the education, all working toward the health of the community, it’s the optimal way to make sure that all of the needs of the people are addressed.”

But Will Henderson, president emeritus of The Queen’s Medical Center, said ‘selling’ the idea of the school’s cooperation with the existing community hospitals was no small task.

“We had to go almost one by one, physician to physician,” Henderson recalled in a conversation with JABSOM Dean Jerris Hedges. “We began to garner some support from leading physicians.”

Dr. John McDermott, who helped establish the school’s psychiatry department, says the adoption of the community-hospital based system – a clear departure from the traditional systems of many mainland medical schools – was critical for Hawai‘i.

“Our medical students in their third and fourth years needed to be taught in a clinical situation with acute medical problems – psychiatric, surgical, medical, pediatric,” McDermott says. “The hospitals in town were really what we needed to learn about the culture.”

Kuakini Medical Center (Courtesy of Kuakini Health System); Courtesy of The Queen’s Medical Center (Photo by Hal Lum and Masayo Suzuki); Kapi‘olani Medical Center for Women and Children (Courtesy of Hawai‘i Public Health); Pediatric Nursery at Kapi‘olani Medical Center; Chart showing JABSOM and its community partners; Dr. John McDermott; Dr. Satoru Izutsu and Dr. Nanette Judd.

The relationship between JABSOM medical students and alumni residents, and the many community hospitals in Hawai‘i where they get their clinical training, has afforded them a critical opportunity to view a mirror of the culture in the Islands. JABSOM vice dean Dr. Satoshi Izutsu says the exposure to multiple practice settings with embedded cultural sensitivity serves the students well.

“Today the hospitals are very multi-ethnic, which represents the society of Hawai‘i,” Dr. Izutsu says. “These hospitals have a very good sense for training related to cultural issues connected to illness and health.”

One important residual effect of the community-based system has meant giving students a true sense of place.

“From the very start for our students, there has been a connection to the community, and to the community doctors,” says Dr. Nanette Judd, former director of the medical school’s ʻImi Ho‘ōla Post Baccalaureate program. “The system encourages our students to remain in Hawai‘i, to pursue opportunities here to make a difference in the community.”

John A. Burns School of Medicine Dean Jerris Hedges views the creation of the community-based hospital system as a defining masterpiece for the school.

“The local teaching hospitals clearly have been major contributors to our educational program,” Dean Hedges says. “We have wonderful relationships at our affiliated teaching hospitals, including The Queen’s Medical Center, Kuakini Health System, Kapi‘olani Medical Center, Kaiser Permanente, Wahiawa General Hospital, Straub Clinic, Tripler Army Medical Center, and the VA medical clinic.”

60 YEARS OF MEDICINE IN HAWAII

Forging Community Partnerships
Now spanning more than four decades, the ‘Imi Ho'ōla Post-Baccalaureate Program has recruited promising students from historically under-represented or disadvantaged communities.

Dr. Cutting’s son, Dr. John Cutting, recalls that his father set out to rectify what he saw as a failing in school for all cultures and all races. “He set up a program where students from throughout the Pacific would come here and spend three years to do the first two years of medical education,” Dr. Young says. “The students would receive tutorials during the pre-clinical phase of medical education,” Dr. Young says. “The students were called ‘Dean’s Guests.’”

From top left: ‘Imi Ho'ōla students in the Class of 2014-2015 during a work-service project on Moloka‘i; ‘Imi student (now MD Class of 2016) Paul Muna Aguon testifies before the Hawai‘i State Legislature about the value of the JABSOM Department of Native Hawaiian Health and Native Hawaiian Center of Excellence; Dr. Steven Gonsales of Maui (Class of 2015) receives a pin in a ceremony for new physician graduates of Native Hawaiian ancestry; members of the MD Class of 2014 before their Commencement Ceremony; Dr. Naleen Andrade.

Dr. Terry Rogers, the man who succeeded Dr. Cutting, continued the school’s efforts at outreach and inclusion, specifically for Hawai’i’s indigenous people. He came up with an innovative plan built from the ‘Dean’s Guests’ program.

“Terry Rogers found that some of the students applying for medical school locally could benefit from beefing up their studies in the basic sciences in the pre-medical years,” says Dr. Young. “And that’s how ‘Imi Ho'ōla got started.”

Dr. Rogers called on Dr. Young in 1972 to launch what became ‘Imi Ho'ōla—’Those who seek to heal’—a program designed to give more Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders access to a career in medicine.

Now spanning more than four decades, the ‘Imi Ho'ōla Post-Baccalaureate Program has recruited promising students from historically under-represented or disadvantaged communities. Twelve students per year are subjected to a rigorous year-long course of study in the basic sciences prior to their admission to the John A. Burns School of Medicine.

‘‘Imi Ho'ōla has been a successful medical education model that’s made a difference,” says Dr. Nanette Judd, former director of the program. Nearly 100% of the 240 physicians who have participated in the ‘Imi Ho'ōla program—roughly 40% of them native Hawaiians—have graduated from JABSOM’s MD program.

One distinguished graduate of the ‘Imi Ho'ōla program is Dr. Naleen Andrade, former chair of the Department of Native Hawaiian Health and Native Hawaiian Center of Excellence (NHCOE). The Department of Native Hawaiian Health is the only department of its kind in the country: a multi-mission academic department in a medical school focused on the health of indigenous peoples, leaders in other parts of the world,” Dr. Kasuya says. “There’s no question about how valuable the program has been.”

The success of the ‘Imi Ho'ōla program spawned a greater awareness of health issues and health disparities among the native Hawaiian population.

The ensuing establishment of the Native Hawaiian Center of Excellence (NHCOE), built through the dogged support of former JABSOM dean Dr. Christian Guhlbrandsen, sought to further the cause by providing education and training enhancement programs to native Hawaiian students, and those at the post-doctoral stage of their career.

“The Native Hawaiian Center of Excellence is, once again, all about providing opportunities,” says Dr. Nanette Judd. “There’s a medical education component, there’s a component that speaks to research, and there’s also a component that provides health services.”

Ultimately, under then JABSOM dean Dr. Ed Cadman in 2003, both the ‘Imi Ho'ōla and the NHCOE programs became part of the newly-formed Department of Native Hawaiian Health (NHH).

Dr. Marjorie Mau was appointed as the founding Department Chair of NHH in 2003. Under her leadership, the department grew to become the only clinical department in a U.S. medical school dedicated to the health and well-being of an indigenous population.

“The Department of Native Hawaiian Health is the only department of its kind in the country: a multi-mission academic department in a medical school focused on the health of indigenous peoples,” says Dr. Satoru Izutsu. “We’re very proud of it.”

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Some have chronic pain.
Some have bruises or sores.
Some have respiratory problems.
Some have substance dependencies, or mental health issues.
Others stop by for a simple wellness check.
But for all of the folks who seek out the mobile van operated by the John A. Burns School of Medicine’s Homeless Outreach Medical Education (HOME) Project, there’s one common factor: each has been living on the streets, down on his or her luck.
The van makes its way to four different clinics a week at five different low-income neighborhood sites across O‘ahu, to provide health care for homeless families who live at state-sponsored shelters, and for families among the unsheltered homeless population.
“It’s a free medical visit with our faculty and our medical students,” says Dr. Damon Sakai, JABSOM director of Medical Student Education. “A segment of the population with the greatest need gets excellent medical care, and our medical students get to see the challenges of the homeless. I think that direct interaction leads to greater compassion for our future physicians.”

HOME Project was founded in 2005 by Family Medicine and Community Health associate professor Dr. Jill Omori, in conjunction with the JABSOM medical students.
HOME’s mission is to improve homeless access to health care, and to increase student and physician understanding of the health care needs of the homeless.
“I was always interested in underserved care,” says Dr. Omori, “And going through JABSOM as a student, I felt there were not that many opportunities to work with this population.”
“The goal of the program is not to just provide incidental services here and there,” says JABSOM Associate Dean for Medical Education Dr. Richard Kasuya.
“Truly to try to help these patients learn where state and other resources are,” Dr. Kasuya says, “To help them connect with those resources, and perhaps show them a path where they can move beyond their current situation.”
And HOME Project’s steady growth is testimony to its success.

“We now service both sheltered and unsheltered homeless,” says Dr. Omori. “We also started a sub-program that provides mentorship for homeless teens. Currently our community health elective has 12-15 students a year.”

“By providing our services, we’re filling a gap that currently exists between what the state and federal governments can provide for these individuals.”

From left: Medical student Ellyse Tom, Ray Grigo, Downtown Walmart Store Manager, Dr. Jill Omori, medical student Laura Ardo in front of the HOME Project van donated by the Walmart Foundation; Medical student treating a homeless man in Kaka‘ako; Office of Medical Education Directors Past and Present: Dr. Richard Kasuya, Dr. Les Tam, Dr. Damon Sakai and Dr. Alex Anderson (seated).
New emphasis upon the support and development of research at the John A. Burns School of Medicine gained traction around 2005, through the vision of JABSOM’s then dean Dr. Edwin C. Cadman. Cadman championed a model that funneled grant funding for research into the medical school system. “Dr. Cadman said ’I want your grants, bring me your grants,’” says Dr. Steven Ward, director of the JABSOM Institute for Biogenesis Research. “He said, ‘The more grants you get, the better. Let’s change this thing into a culture of research.’”

Dr. Ward, from Rutgers University, along with Dr. Marla Berry from Harvard, the current chair of Cellular Molecular Biology at JABSOM, were among the earliest researchers lured by Dr. Cadman’s new model. Their funding histories provide good examples of the effectiveness and success of Dr. Cadman’s model.

“Tin in the 19th year of funding from the National Institute for Diabetes, Digestive Diseases, and Kidney Disorders,” Dr. Berry says of her research in the field of selenium applications and effects. And Dr. Ward says his group’s $20 million in COBRE funding over a 10-year period brings money to the state of Hawai‘i. “Eighty percent of that $20 million goes directly into the Hawaii economy,” Ward says. “And our Institute for Biogenesis Research has turned its initial $2 million start-up cost into grant funding revenues of $36 million, 80 percent of which also goes into the state economy.”

Alongside its ground-breaking research designed to aid the physical health of the people of Hawai‘i, the John A. Burns School of Medicine has also made milestone strides in the study of mental health. Dr. Naleen Andrade, former chair of the department of psychiatry at the medical school, pioneered research into native Hawaiian mental health. “We completed an epidemiologic project with 7,000 native Hawaiian high school students on three different islands,” Dr. Andrade says. “And the knowledge we extracted from that study formed the foundation for all the future research that unfolded with youth in Hawai‘i.”

“Roughly 27% of the kids studied were native Hawaiian. It was the largest number of native Hawaiians ever assessed in a community-based setting. The balance was made up of all the other ethnic backgrounds of high school kids in Hawai‘i. So we had a wonderful epidemiologic map to work with going forward, to really shape treatment, prevention, and ways of thinking about how Hawaiian culture impacts youth.”

“Dr. John McDermott, whom Dr. Andrade succeeded as head of the psychiatry department, says Dr. Andrade’s research was indeed breakthrough. “It was done by Hawaiian psychiatrists, with the Hawaiian people. They were able to get into the community, to get permission to be able to find out what the suicide rate was in teenagers,” Dr. McDermott says. “They found it was higher. Why was it higher? What were the mental issues among Hawaiian teenagers? This opened the door for us to begin treatment and prevention work in the schools.”
Behind the doors of the JABSOM Biosciences Building, countless scientific research breakthroughs are brewing that feature a connection to the natural world.

“Dr. Jun Panee here became interested in the healthful benefits of an extract from bamboo, a traditional Chinese medicine,” Dr. Marla Berry says. “Dr. Panee took a serious scientific approach, and collaborated with chemistry researchers to identify the healthful properties in bamboo.”

“She discovered evidence of the bamboo extract’s effectiveness in fighting lipotoxicity, a syndrome that can play a role in heart disease, obesity, and diabetes,” Dr. Berry explains. “Dr. Panee has also identified the bamboo extract’s strength in combating breast cancer tumors.”

Dr. Berry notes that studies like Dr. Panee’s – examining the health value of abundant, readily available, natural resources like bamboo – are indicative of the wealth of research frontiers still to explore right here in Hawai‘i.

“A lot of studies being done here in Hawai‘i are focusing on the marine environment,” Dr. Berry explains. “There are corals, and sponges, and beautiful sea slugs with incredible colors that are derived from toxins in them that warn their predators not to eat them.”

“Researchers are finding that many of the marine organisms have analgesic and anti-cancer properties,” Dr. Berry says. “Hawai‘i has so many terrestrial plants and marine species that are found nowhere else in the world.”

“The papaya ringspot virus is a classic example of the real-world value of research here at JABSOM,” says Dr. Berry. “The virus was essentially wiping out the papaya industry here. Researchers here found a way to use a small amount of RNA to inhibit the virus from replicating, and essentially saved the papaya crop.”

The array of research projects at the John A. Burns School of Medicine is a complex, ever-changing mosaic. Institute for Biogenesis Research director Dr. Ward offers up a non-comprehensive list of a few current projects: “One team is trying to develop new vaccines to treat genetically-modified cancers. Another is working to block obesity in children born to obese mothers. Another team is analyzing the exact effect of drug use during pregnancy. Still others are studying diabetes and AIDS/HIV, both serious health issues in Hawai‘i.”

JABSOM Dean Jerris Hedges, MD reinforces the notion that the ongoing research has critical real-world applications.

“We’re looking at many of the mechanisms by which viruses and bacteria cause disease in humans,” Dr. Hedges says. “We’re looking at ways to deliver drugs and genes through micro-bubbles that can float through the circulation, then open up and push their therapeutic contents into the tissue.”

Often the JABSOM research efforts represent a response to a pressing health issue. Dr. William Haning, psychiatry and neuropsychology professor and principal investigator for the Pacific Addiction Research Center, has spearheaded research and clinical trials in methamphetamine addiction treatment.

Exploring these healing powers of the Islands’ natural resources represents a continuum that stretches back to the healing wisdom of the native Hawaiians.

“The problems associated with meth use in the Islands, along with alcohol and opiate dependence, led us to establish the first addictions residency training program west of the Mississippi,” Haning says. “Our work in both research and training has helped us to better manage patients’ care.”
For many students and graduates of the John A. Burns School of Medicine, choosing a career path in medicine began early.

Laura Houk [JABSOM MD class of 2018] hopes to choose her medical career path based on what will serve the Islands best. “I want to pick my direction based on what Hawai’i needs,” Houk says. Fortunately, there has been an irresistible draw for JABSOM alumni to pursue their medical practice here in the Islands. “If our students finish medical school here, then do their residency here in Hawai’i, we have an over 85% practitioner retention rate,” says JABSOM Dean Ferris Hedges. “That’s very best in the nation.”

The MD Class of 2015 at their Convocation Ceremony at Kennedy Theatre. Members of the MD Class of 2015 celebrate as they learn where they will begin their Residency Training as new MDs. Dr. Satoru Izutsu, a problem-based learning session with MD students held on Hawai’i Island; Courtney Gaddis (MD Class of 2017) examines a volunteer pediatric patient in the JABSOM Center for Clinical Skills.

**Students of Medicine**

**Tomorrow’s Health Care Leaders**

“This year we had roughly 2,200 applicants. We have room for 68 students.” John A. Burns School of Medicine vice dean Dr. Satoru Izutsu confesses that the process of winnowing the extraordinary group of candidates for admission to medical school at JABSOM is an arduous one indeed. “In our entering class of 68, 87% are residents of the state of Hawai’i, and we take 13% who are applicants from the rest of the country,” Dr. Izutsu says. “With a population of roughly 1.4 million people in Hawai’i, we have about 300 who apply annually to our school.”

And Dr. Izutsu says the decision about every applicant, for every seat, in the medical school’s entering class is a critical one — because a large share of the students who fill those seats go on to become the medical professionals who practice in the state of Hawai’i.

“There are a little more than 3,000 practicing physicians in the state,” Dr. Izutsu says. “Currently, over half are graduates or faculty of the John A. Burns School of Medicine.”

Exactly who are those students? And how are they chosen? “The ones that make it to the top have qualities where a paper and pencil analysis probably won’t reflect their potential,” Dr. Izutsu says. “We know that they’re bright academically. But then we find that we need to ask other questions. Do they have leadership skills? Can they relate to people? Are they really compassionate about helping people? Finally, are they mentally and physically healthy?”

While there may not be a “typical” candidate who is accepted for admission to the school, JABSOM associate dean for medical education Dr. Richard Kasuya says most do share some important characteristics. “First, they have a genuine love and concern for the state of Hawai’i,” Dr. Kasuya says. “Second, they’re obviously very bright,” Dr. Kasuya continues. “Out of the thousands of outstanding applicants, we can only accept a very small number. So we’ve really talking about extremely bright students.”

Finally, there’s something more in them than just brain power. The most successful students here are people who can relate really well to others. We’re looking for medical students who have demonstrated that there is something quite shining in their character.”

—Dr. Richard Kasuya

“For many students and graduates of the John A. Burns School of Medicine, choosing a career path in medicine began early. “I was the oldest in a large extended family,” says Kapo’olani Medical Center for Women and Children (KMCWC) pediatric resident Dr. Kristine Layugan [JABSOM MD class of 2012]. “I knew I wanted to pursue a career with children. I shadowed my pediatrician, and it went from there.”

One of Layugan’s colleagues, KMCWC pediatrics clerkship director Dr. Kyra Len [JABSOM MD class of 2003], literally grew up in the system. “I started at Kapo’olani when I was in high school. I used to volunteer in the playroom,” Dr. Len says. “I was the only one in my family who was a non-medical student.”

Laura Houk [JABSOM MD class of 2018] hopes to return to practice medicine in her home town. “Seeing that there’s a need here has inspired me to want to come back and help,” Lee says.
Some of Hawai‘i’s future health care leaders may have never had the opportunity to see the inside of a classroom at the John A. Burns School of Medicine, were it not for a bit of financial assistance through scholarships. “I was very fortunate to be a Weinman Fellow,” says Dr. Alyson Tamamoto (JABSOM MD class of 2011), co-chief resident in the pediatrics department at KMCWC. “Barry and Virginia Weinman offered to pay my tuition for all four years of medical school, plus an educational stipend for four years.”

Another recipient of the Weinman Foundation’s largesse is resident Dr. Kristine Layugan. “It’s so expensive to go through medical school,” Dr. Layugan says. “To not have an enormous financial burden after medical school has been such a blessing, and I’m just so grateful to the Weinmans for their support.”

Pediatrics residency intern Dr. Blair Limm says her four-year scholarship at JABSOM not only eased what would have been a tremendous financial burden; it also allowed her to freely choose the career path of her dreams. “Without the scholarship, I would not have had the luxury of choosing my path in a primary care field like pediatrics,” Dr. Limm says. “Thanks to my scholarship, I was able to choose something that I love, instead of worrying about the financial burden hanging over my head.”

Sometimes it takes resourcefulness, persistence, and a bit of creativity to ease the financial burden of medical school. JABSOM student Michele Kanemori (JABSOM MD class of 2018) and her family cobbled together a handful of scholarships to pave her way. “I received a JABSOM MD Alumni scholarship, and a Will J. Henderson Aloha Fund scholarship,” Kanemori says. “The scholarships have made a tremendous difference for me.”

It is not hyperbole to suggest that the good health of the people of Hawai‘i can be traced in large part to the talented, skilled, dedicated students and alumni of the John A. Burns School of Medicine. “Hawai‘i ranks highest in health among all other states,” says Dr. F. Don Parsa, chief of the plastic surgery division at JABSOM. “It’s my firm belief that it’s because of our medical school, and the quality of the medical students that we select.”

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“Our students are not only selected on scholastic achievements,” Dr. Parsa says. “They’re selected on their humanism, and on the service they provide to the community.”

“They become superb, giving individuals when they finish medical school, and we are all truly blessed in having our students join the community, as servants of the people.”

And Dr. Naleen Andrade, former chair of the psychiatry department at JABSOM, has a message for the benefactors who have invested in the students at the John A. Burns School of Medicine. “For those of you who are donors that give to our school,” Dr. Andrade says, “I can assure you that your gifts are not wasted.”

“I am living proof of the kind of dedication. I would never have become a physician. I came from humble beginnings, and because of your donations, because of the commitment of our state legislators and the namesake for our school, Gov. John A. Burns, I exist.”

“There are many other remarkable students from our school whom I’ve had the honor of mentoring,” Dr. Andrade says. “And for the next generation, it is as Gov. Burns said, ‘Amongst Hawai‘i’s children, there is greatness waiting to be made possible.’”

From left: Drs. Ashley Saito, Aileen Tanaka, Rajinder Nirwan and Joseph Schroers-Martin take a selfie before their MD 2015 Convocation Ceremony. Thumbs-up from members of the MD Class of 2016 as they learn how to suit up for surgery; Marina Hitosugi-Levesque (MD Class of 2016) in a clinical training session; MD Class of 2017 in a light moment before beginning 3rd year clinical rotations.
Perhaps the single most important frontier for the John A. Burns School of Medicine in the years ahead is the forging of key partnerships, both inside and outside the medical school.

JABSOM Dean Jerris Hedges points to a critically productive alliance that will be further nurtured within the boundaries of the campus at Kaka’ako.

“Over the last four years we’ve strengthened ties with the UH Cancer Center, creating new opportunities for collaboration in terms of diagnosis and treatment of cancer,” Dr. Hedges says.

“The opportunity for the cancer center and the medical school to work more closely, around building strong, innovative cancer treatment programs, is just now beginning to come together,” Dr. Hedges says. “I’m excited by that.”

An emphasis on collaboration in the future could also change the manner in which health care is delivered throughout the 50th state.

“We’re seeing more consolidation of hospitals into systems that will collectively provide support,” says Dean Hedges. “I see the medical school as being able to partner with those hospitals, helping to organize core teaching faculty and leadership within the medical staffs that these hospitals really need to thrive.”

“The health care that was delivered 10 years ago will not be the health care delivered 10 years from now,” Dr. Hedges predicts. “We will be working more with nurse practitioners, with pharmacists, and with other allied health personnel to form teams of providers.”

Looking to the Future

It began as a mere pipe dream, five decades ago: a world-class medical education program and facility for the people of Hawaiʻi.

The John A. Burns School of Medicine has, in the ensuing years, managed to consistently grow and evolve, through a dedication to the very highest standards of scholarship in medical education.

Today JABSOM, and all it represents – Hawaiʻi’s finest medical students, residents and physicians, trained by distinguished, respected teaching professionals – is deeply and inexorably woven into the fabric of health care in the Islands.

“This medical school was created for all the people of Hawaiʻi, especially those from difficult backgrounds,” says Dr. Benjamin Young.

“They’ve all richly benefitted from the accomplishments of Hawaiʻi’s own children who are the graduates of the John A. Burns School of Medicine,” Dr. Young says.

“What remains for JABSOM in the years that lie ahead is an entire universe of exploration, innovation, and excellence in medical education and health care delivery.

“If we look at the goals of our medical school into the future, just like our ancestors, we must point our sails into the wind, and reach for those landfalls that are still untouched.”

—Dr. Benjamin Young
By the Numbers

#1 Rank for NIH research awards among public medical schools without a university hospital
264 Medical students
$34,896 Annual medical student tuition and fees for Hawaiʻi residents
87% Medical students who are kamaʻaina
50% Hawaiʻi physicians who trained or teach at JABSOM
>$40M Research dollars brought into the state annually
241 Faculty part-time

244 Residents and fellows
20 Number of Residency programs
$69,240 Annual medical student tuition and fees for non-residents
1,318 Volunteer clinical faculty
188 Faculty fulltime
2,200 Medical applicants annually
#19 Rank in the U.S. in Primary Care for 2016 by U.S. News & World Report

>4,000 Alumni (Medical School and Residency)
85% Retention of those who complete both Medical School and Residency training in- state. Number 1 in the nation.
68 Class size of medical students
#85 Rank for NIH research awards among 139 U.S. medical schools receiving NIH awards

THE JOHN A. BURNS SCHOOL OF MEDICINE 50 YEARS OF HEALING IN HAWAI‘I
John A. Burns School of Medicine
50th Anniversary Sponsors*

*As of June 1, 2015

John A. Burns School of Medicine • University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

Creating Hawai‘i’s Health Care Future:
One Student At A Time

HALF OF HAWAI‘I’S PRACTICING PHYSICIANS trained and/or teach at the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM).

Your gift to the JABSOM 50th Anniversary Scholarship Fund at the University of Hawai‘i Foundation today will have a direct impact on the lives and careers of our students and on the health care you and your family receive tomorrow.

Mahalo for your support.

To donate or for more information about ways to support the John A. Burns School of Medicine, please contact Elaine Evans, Director of Development, at 808-692-0991 or elaine.evans@uhfoundation.org. You may also donate online at giving.uhfoundation.org/give-now
Hawaiʻi’s Best Doctors Today and Tomorrow

Some of the 288 JABSOM alumni and faculty “Best Doctors” and several of Hawaiʻi’s newest doctors from the JABSOM MD Class of 2015 pictured with Dean Jerris Hedges (back row center).

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