



The Pacific Public Health Fellowship Program

2025 Graduation Highlights - Cohort 4

January Edition, 2026



Building the Next Generation of Local USAPI Public Health Leaders and Champions

The PPHFP is a two-year training program that equips recent college graduates with practical, hands-on public health training, competencies, and a Post-Graduate Certificate in Field Epidemiology.

Supervised by highly experienced and seasoned frontline public health professionals, the PPHFP immerses Fellows in real-world public health practice, to help strengthen the USAPI workforce pipeline, ready to meet current and emerging USAPI health priorities.

Our 4th Cohort graduated in 2025, with **all PPHFP Fellows successfully transitioned into the local USAPI workforce**, marking another milestone in strengthening local capacity and cultivating the next generation of USAPI public health leaders.

Table of Contents

PPHFP Message • 2

Cohort Four at a Glance • 3

Fellow Spotlights • 4

Thank You and Shout Outs • 14

Strengthening the USAPI Public Health Workforce Pipeline

Message from the PPHFP Team

As we enter 2026, we proudly celebrate the successful graduation of PIHOA's Pacific Public Health Fellowship Program (PPHFP), Cohort 4.

In 2025, ten rising public health professionals demonstrated remarkable dedication as they trained across the USAPIs, building critical public health capacity and making a meaningful impact in their island communities.

Congratulations to all ten PPHFP Fellows, who graduated Cohort 4 of the PPHFP Fellowship, and **successfully transitioned to employment** in local USAPI Ministries and Departments of Health, helping to strengthen the local workforce pipeline.

This PPHFP newsletter highlights their achievements and contributions to the USAPI Ministries and Departments of Health. We are deeply grateful for the vital role of mentorship and partnership from their Host Site Supervisors and local leadership, who continue to support building a skilled, competent, and Pacific-led public health workforce.

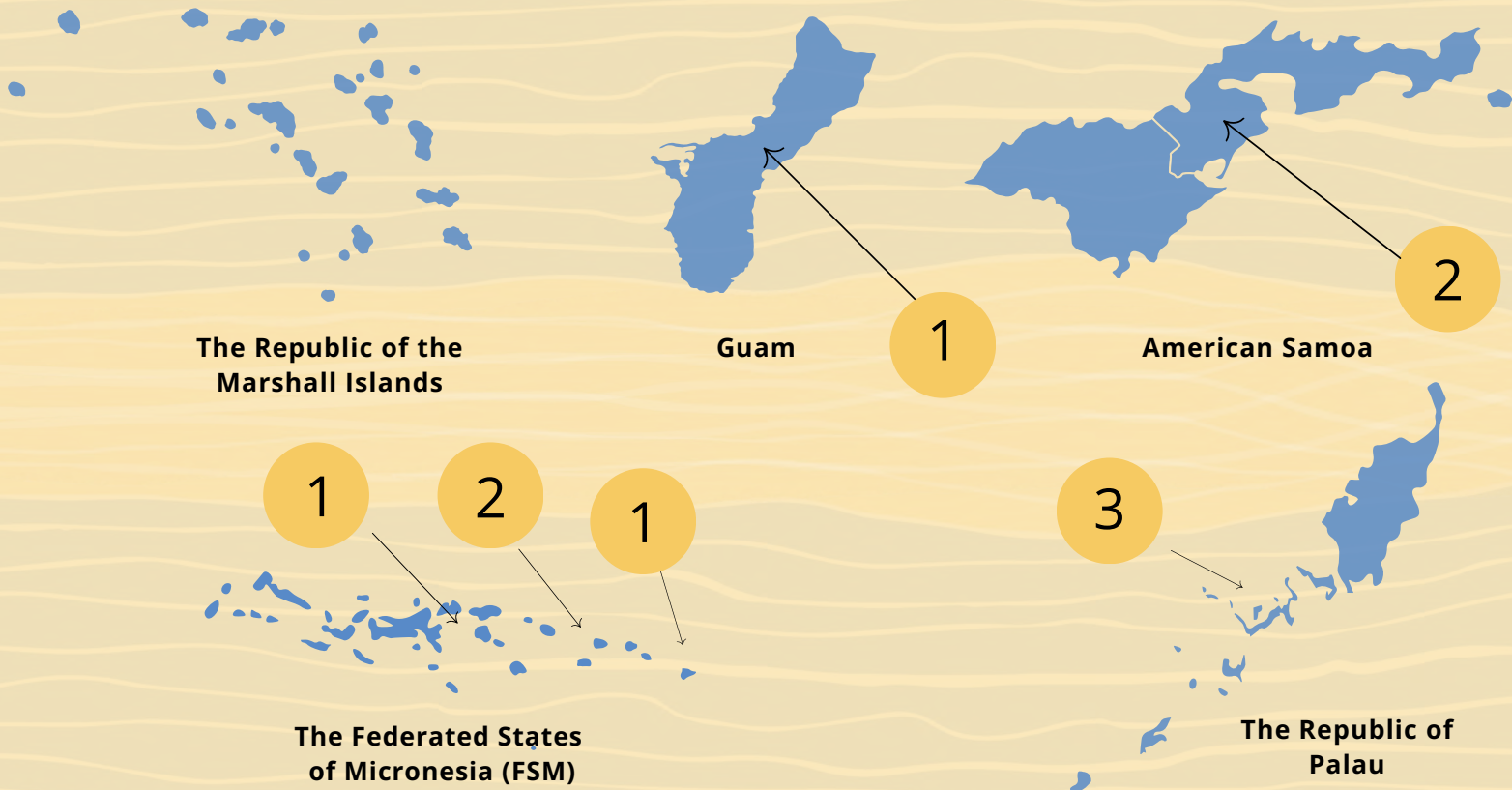
Congratulations Cohort 4! 🎉

Your journey is just beginning... We look forward to seeing you all in the frontlines of public health for your Islands in 2026, and beyond!



PPHFP Cohort 4

Fellowship Term: August 2023– July 2025



Projects Completed

29

Trainings Completed

77

Key Deliverables

44



Taputailo Fe'a

Maternal and Child Health
American Samoa
Department of Health



Meghan Paletaoga

Maternal and Child Health
American Samoa
Department of Health



Joaquin Alik

TB / Leprosy Program
Pohnpei State Department
of Health and Social Services



Karmi Alik

Laboratory
Pohnpei State Department
of Health and Social Services



Kendall Titimil

Community Health Center
Palau Ministry of Health
and Human Services



Kebang Ngiraklang

Belau Hospital Pharmacy
Palau Ministry of Health
and Human Services



Kedei Yaoch

Communicable Diseases
Palau Ministry of Health
and Human Services



Cameron Murphy

Maternal and Child Health
Guam Department of Public
Health and Social Services



Lyma Nero

TB Program
Chuuk State Department
of Health Services



Kun Neth

Communicable Diseases
Kosrae State Department
of Health Services



GUAM

DEPARTMENT

Guam Department of Public Health and Social Services

PROGRAM

Maternal and Child Health Program

EMPLOYED

Data Control Clerk II

Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program

Amy St. Pierre
PPHFP Fellow

Cameron Murphy
Supervised by Margarita Gay

Projects

Maternal and infant mortality and morbidity

Support the establishment and operation of a Maternal Mortality Review Committee (MMRC)

Understanding and improving local access to maternal healthcare

“PPHFP has been like a doorway — one that leads to new ideas, countless possibilities, and tons of support. Since becoming a Fellow, I've been able to leave my desk to better connect with my community, and I feel now that my voice is heard.”



Key Deliverables

- Create a maternal and child health dashboard
- Create death, infant death, fetal demise, and marriage spreadsheets for public health agencies.
- SOP for data collection and dissemination
- Data abstraction for MMRIA
- Creating policies/manual for MMRC
- Promotion of educational material: Hear Her Campaign, maternal warning signs, health clinic resources
- Breastfeeding education
- Letters of support for MMRC
- Charts and presentations for maternal and child health needs assessment
- Home visiting calendar (CQI Project)

Skills Gained

- Data analysis and visualization
- Social and leadership skills
- Working with community, and the public
- Establishing a program or committee from scratch (policies, budgeting, organization of people and resources)

Trainings Attended

9



PALAU

DEPARTMENT

**Ministry of Health
and Human Services**

PROGRAM

Communicable Disease Program

EMPLOYED

**Surveillance Officer
Communicable Disease Program**

Fellow

Kedei Yaoch

Supervised by Connie Olikong

Projects

Prevalence baseline of
viral hepatitis

Viral hepatitis B epi-profile
for Palau

Coordination of timely
case investigation and
contact tracing for
communicable diseases

“Serving in Palau through the PIHOA Fellowship taught me that impactful public health begins with community, compassion, and commitment. Every challenge became a lesson, and every connection a step toward lasting change.”



Key Deliverables

- Development of a viral hepatitis Epi profile
- Creation of a screening intake form in the Bangladeshi language
- One-page publication of communicable disease unit story board

Skills Gained

- Analytic and assessment
- Policy development
- Program planning
- Communication
- Community partnership
- Leadership and systems thinking
- Community outreach
- Contact tracing

Trainings Attended

8



Fellow
Kebang Ngiraklang
Supervised by Clarette Matlab

PALAU

DEPARTMENT

**Ministry of Health
and Human Services**

PROGRAM

Belau Hospital Pharmacy

EMPLOYED

**Pharmacy Assistant
Balau Hospital Pharmacy**

Project

Antibiotic prescription pattern
and their inappropriate use to
treat infections at
Belau National Hospital
from May to December 2023

“
During this fellowship,
I've developed new strengths
in health education,
community outreach, and
data-driven decision-making
- all tools I'll carry into my
public health pharmacy
career to create lasting
impact.
”



Key Deliverables

- Report: Antibiotic prescriptions patterns and inappropriate use
- Information flyer: Medication Information for Belau National Hospital

Skills Gained

- Data analysis
- Report writing
- Communication skills
- Public speaking
- Networking

Trainings Attended

5



PALAU

DEPARTMENT

**Palau Ministry of Health
and Human Services**

PROGRAM

Community Health Center

EMPLOYED

**Patient Care Coordinator
Palau Community Health Center**

Fellow

Kendall Titimil

Supervised by Edolem Ikerdeu

Projects

Palau community health center
billing and collections
discrepancies

Palau HPV vaccination
social marketing plan

Palau community health
center telehealth project

“*This program has given me the tools and connections I need to confidently enter the public health workplace, equipped and ready to serve my community.*”



Key Deliverables

- Creation of the Palau Community Health Center billing and collections dashboard
- Palau HPV vaccination social marketing plan and campaign
- Assessment, policy development and implementation training of tele-health project

Skills Gained

- Data analysis (quantitative and qualitative)
- Interpersonal skills and professionalism in the public health workplace
- Technical skills on SMS reminder system
- Technical writing
- Program planning
- Conducting focus groups

Trainings Attended

5



AMERICAN SAMOA

DEPARTMENT

American Samoa
Department of Health

PROGRAM

Maternal and Child Health
Program

EMPLOYED

Newborn Screener / Health Educator
Helping Babies Hear / STD Program

Amy St. Pierre
PPHFP Fellow

Taputailo Fe'a

Supervised by Dr. Anaise Uso
and Bethany Malae-Toelupe

Projects

Assessment of characteristics
of pregnant mothers in
American Samoa

Identify data gaps in the
'Helping Babies Hear'
program

Early intervention referral
and enrollment benchmark

“
“A tafe manino le matavai
ona tae’ele fiafia lea o
ma’a o le alia.”
“Every rock in the water
will be pure if the spring
runs clear.”
”



Key Deliverables

- Brief summary: Data protocols for collecting Early Intervention (EI) referrals and enrollment
- List and description of program reports in SILAS
- Table comparing EI referrals and enrollment rates (2023)
- Report: Gaps in EI referral and enrollment process
- MOU draft with Part C program
- Infographic: Next steps after hearing loss identification (Samoan)
- Infographic: Ear care/hygiene (English/Samoan)
- Summary report: Hear Her Campaign research
- Survey: Hear Her Campaign
- Data table and PowerPoint: Hear Her Campaign results
- Flowchart and SOP for the maternal and child health program
- Poster: Epidemiologic profile of women having live births (2024); Hear Her Campaign material, and video creation.

Skills Gained

- Public health knowledge and application
- Data management and analysis
- Community engagement and communication
- Training and collaboration
- Technical and administrative skills
- Program planning skills
- Health equity skills
- Management and finance skills
- Leadership and systems thinking skills

Trainings Attended

10



Amy St. Pierre
PPHFP Fellow
Meghan Paletaoga
Supervised by Dr. Anaise Uso
and Ipu Eliapo

AMERICAN SAMOA

DEPARTMENT

**American Samoa
Department of Health**

PROGRAM

**Maternal and Child Health
Program**

EMPLOYED

MCH Epidemiology Technician
Maternal and Child Health Program

Projects

Coordination of rheumatic heart
disease patient care

Evaluate the quality of prophylactic
antibiotic delivery to residents with
rheumatic fever and rheumatic
heart disease

Hear Her Campaign:
Adaptation for rheumatic heart
disease promotional materials

Assist in developing the first ever
autism registry in American Samoa
for the Leo of Aiga (Family Voices)
Center

“

*"O le ala i le Pule o le
Tautua"*

*The pathway to leadership
is through service.*

”

THYROID GOITER



Key Deliverables

- Creation of a SOP for rheumatic heart disease data collection and reporting
- Report: Analysis of rheumatic heart disease and Rheumatic fever in American Samoa
- Creation of rheumatic heart disease Factsheet

Skills Gained

- Evaluation, data entry and analysis
- Communication skills
- Partnership skills
- Technical writing and excel skills
- Professionalism skills
- Leadership skills
- Coordination skills

Trainings Attended

10



POHNPEI

DEPARTMENT

**Pohnpei State Department
of Health and Social Services**

PROGRAM

TB / Hansens Disease Program

EMPLOYED

**Hansen's Disease Program
Coordinator**

Fellow

Joaquin Alik

Supervised by Mercedes
Gilmette

Projects

Screening diabetes mellitus
patients for tuberculosis

Create outreach materials
(brochures, pamphlets,
booklets, posters)

Strengthen program mission
(detect, treat, eliminate)

“One of the most meaningful parts of this Fellowship was to expand our skills and knowledge about what public health is and how to be in the field helping those who are in need. This Fellowship helped me gain valuable experience, strengthen perseverance, enhance adaptability, and resilience. I am thankful to the Fellowship for all the mentorship and encouragement which allows me to make a difference in my community. I can't wait to use everything that I have gained in this Fellowship for my Island!”

”



Key Deliverables

- Create a standard operating procedure for screening diabetes mellitus patients for tuberculosis
- Created leprosy outreach materials
- Conducted outreach and screenings across Pohnpei

Skills Gained

- Tuberculin skin test (TST/PPD)
- Data management: collect, enter, clean, analyze and report data
- Health equity
- Strong communication skills
- Gained leadership qualities: collaboration, empathy, resiliency, and compassion.

Trainings Attended

7



POHNPEI

DEPARTMENT

**Pohnpei State Department
of Health and Social Services**

PROGRAM

Pohnpei Hospital Laboratory

EMPLOYED

Medical Laboratory Technologist

Fellow

Karmi Soar Alik

Supervised by Ledua Wati
Vukialau

Projects

Laboratory Quality Management
Systems (LQMS)

Laboratory finance, budgeting,
and planning

Laboratory surveillance of AMR,
PCSI diseases and target outbreak-
prone diseases

Prevalence of antimicrobial
resistance in Pohnpei State Hospital
from January 2024 to March 2025

Antibiogram

“One of the most meaningful parts of this fellowship program was the continuous support throughout the Fellowship - ranging from professional direct guidance to personal encouragement. This program has also expanded my understanding of public health, and I really appreciate the dedication of my fellows who also share the same inspiration for our island communities.”



Key Deliverables

- Report: Prevalence of antimicrobial resistance in Pohnpei State Hospital January 2024 to March 2025
- Create standard operational procedure for laboratory surveillance weekly report specifically for antimicrobial resistance.

Skills Gained

- Data analysis
- Effective communication
- Supervising
- Planning
- Interpretation of results

**Trainings
Attended**

10



CHUUK

DEPARTMENT

**Chuuk State Department
of Health and Social Services**

PROGRAM

TB Program

EMPLOYED

TB Program Coordinator

Fellow

Lyma Nero

Supervised by Dr. Dorina Fred

Projects

Strengthen TB case
detection and follow-up

Improve eyecare services
in Chuuk

TB capacity building and
systems strengthening

This Fellowship Program helped me to gain valuable experience, network with health professionals, and develop a stronger understanding of the public health field. Additionally, it gave me more self-assurance and enabled me to take on new tasks to better serve my Island.



Key Deliverables

- Development of a standard operating procedure for TB contact tracing for the TB Program, with flow chart.
- Training of staff in new SOP and its implementation for the Division of Public Health

Skills Gained

- Data analysis
- Communication skills,
- Technical writing skills
- Create SOPs and system flow charts
- Leadership development

**Trainings
Attended**

7



KOSRAE

DEPARTMENT

**Kosrae State Department
of Health and Social Services**

PROGRAM

Communicable Disease Program

EMPLOYED

Surveillance Officer

Fellow

Kun Neth

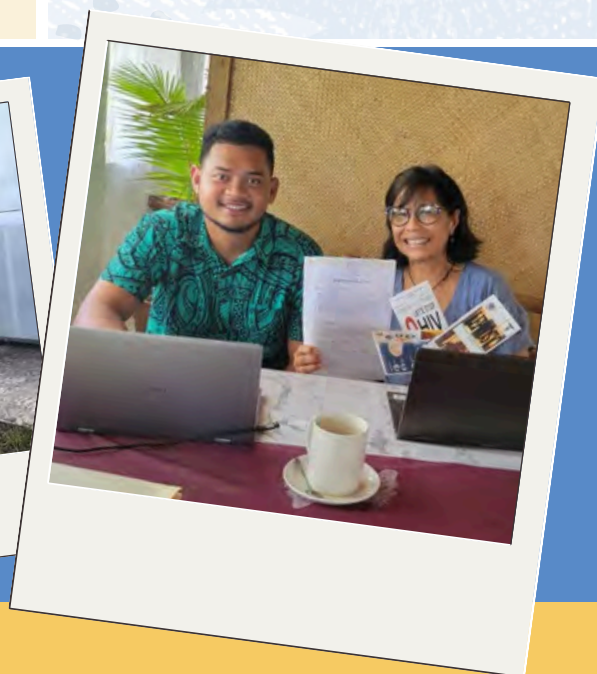
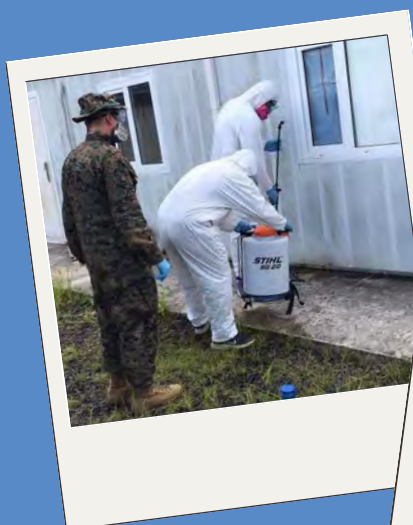
Supervised by Elias David
and Foster Waguk

Project

Hansen's Disease:
A profile to improve
standard procedures and
reporting for Kosrae Health
Services

“
*Leadership is unlocking
people's potential to become
better.” (Bill Bradley)*

*This is what I believe the
PPHFP Fellowship has done to
me.*
”



Key Deliverables

- Creation of brochures for STI's
 - Designed brochures
 - Translate into local language
 - Distribution of brochures to targeted locations
E.g. Hightschools and small stores in each village
- Community education and outreach
 - Target high risk population in Kosrae
 - Testing at targeted locations
- Hansen's disease profile to improve standard
procedures and reporting for Kosrae Health Services
- Creation of SOP for Hansen's disease in Kosrae

Skills Gained

- Data collection and analysis
- Communication skills
- Community engagement
- Public speaking

Trainings Attended

6

Thank you to our partners CDC and Host Site Supervisors

“PPHFP is a very good or one of the best avenues to recruiting into the public health workforce. We just really benefitted from all of the Fellows.”

-Host Site Supervisor



We extend our heartfelt thanks
to the Centers for Disease Control and
Prevention (CDC), and to our
dedicated PPHFP Host Site Supervisors
for their continued partnership and
mentorship.

Your collaboration has been essential in
creating meaningful learning experiences
and strengthening the public health
workforce across the region.

We are deeply grateful for your
commitment to this shared mission.

This work is 100% supported by funds provided by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) through PIHOA's partnership cooperative agreement, OT21-2101: Strengthening the Public Health Systems in the US-Affiliated Pacific Islands. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by CDC/HHS, or the U.S. Government.

“We are going to lose two of our senior staff, they are retiring this year. So [fellow] is going to be taking over the key positions here. They are trained now to do it, so we are really happy we had this PPHFP opportunity.”

Host Site Supervisor

“Their competency is really shining out. At the beginning you have to guide them, but over time, they then take initiative. Now I consider her as a senior staff. She actually is. She's one of our senior staff now, training others, especially all the new staff coming in.”

Host Site Supervisor