



## ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER CAUCUS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

# FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oct. 18, 2016

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**WHO:** Dr. DJ Ida, nationally-renown Denver-based advocate for mental health for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, is awarded the Inaugural Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Award for Health Equity

**WHAT:** Awards Ceremony of the Asian & Pacific Islander Caucus for Public Health

**WHEN:** Monday, Oct. 31, 2016 7:30 – 10:30 PM MT

**WHERE:** Tamai Towers Penthouse, 1255 19<sup>th</sup> Street, Sakura Square, 1255 19<sup>th</sup> Street, Denver, CO 80202

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## Denverite Is Inaugural Recipient of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Award for Health Equity Presented by the Asian & Pacific Islander Caucus for Public Health

***Dr. DJ Ida to receive award at ceremony in Sakura Square Oct. 31***

**Encino, California** — The Asian & Pacific Islander Caucus (APIC) for Public Health is pleased to announce the recipient of the inaugural Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Award for Health Equity presented by APIC.

This seven-year awards partnership with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation recognizes individuals or teams of two individuals who have successfully implemented systems change approaches to reduce health disparities within the past two years.

APIC will award a \$3,000 unrestricted prize to DJ Ida, PhD, Executive Director of the National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association (NAAPIMHA), to be presented at the 2016 APIC Awards Ceremony during the 144th Annual American Public Health Association Meeting and Exposition, on October 31, 2016, at the Tamai Towers Penthouse, in Sakura Square, in Denver, CO.

Dr. Ida (“EE-DA”) is a third-generation Japanese American and Denver native. Her mother’s family was forced out of California and resettled in Colorado as a direct result of Executive Order 9066 which removed 120,000 Japanese Americans and placed them in concentration camps throughout the Western United States.

Dr. Ida has always been aware of the importance of social justice, recognizing the value of diversity and treating everyone with respect. She has devoted her entire career to improving the overall quality of life for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders and rethinking how we identify health, recognizing that mental health is essential to achieving health equity.

**Asian & Pacific Islander Caucus for Public Health**

*In Official Relations with the American Public Health Association*

Dr. Ida says her greatest joy is working with the community to create an emotionally and physically healthier environment.

She began her advocacy over four decades ago when she helped establish the Asian American Educational Opportunity Program at the University of Colorado. She also helped start the Asian Pacific Development Center, a specialty mental health clinic in Denver, and the National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association, NAAPIMHA where she serves as Executive Director. She continues to work towards change and health equity in her policy, training and advocacy work.

She was the lead author for the document “Integrated Care for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders: A Blueprint for Action” that was funded by the Office of Minority Health. Dr. Ida also helped create numerous curricula to improve the health workforce. This includes “Achieving Whole Health,” a training program for community members to learn how to make healthy decisions by integrating the body, mind and spirit.

The Awards Committee that named Dr. Ida for this honor included a prestigious panel of health equity leaders: Mr. Sefa Aina of Pomona College; John Auerbach, MBA, of the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention; Sinsi Hernández-Cancio, Esq, of Families USA; Dr. Ichiro Kawachi of the Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health; and Dr. Adewale Troutman of the University of South Florida. They considered criteria such as contributions toward achieving health equity, and use of a systems change approach to addressing health disparities, including outcomes, innovative approaches, transformational systems change, collaborative leadership, resourcefulness and impact and scalability.

The awards program that will honor Dr. Ida, “Expanding Equity” is being held in conjunction with the 144th American Public Health Association Convention which is bringing 12,000 attendees to the Denver area.

Master of Ceremonies Derek Okubo, Executive Director of Denver’s Agency for Human Rights and Community Partnerships will welcome APIC Awards participants, sponsors, and members.

Dr. Tung Nguyen, Jake Fitisemanu, Jr., and Kathy Ko Chin, who are members of the President’s Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, will keynote. APIC will also recognize the Asian Health & Service Center with the APIC Community Organization Recognition Award (CORA), Elisa Tong, MD, with the APIC Best Published Paper Award, and Janet Chu, MD, MPH, with APIC’s Best Student Abstract Award.

APIC is also hosting a Student and Young Professionals Meet and Greet, which will take place on Tuesday, November 1, 2016, between 8:30 to 10:00 pm at the Hyatt Regency Centennial Ballroom C at 650 15th Street, Denver, CO. The theme of this event is “Inspiring Young Leaders for Equity.”

### **About the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation**

For more than 40 years the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has worked to improve health and health care. RWJF is working with others to build a national Culture of Health that will enable everyone in America to live longer, healthier lives. For more information, visit [www.rwjf.org](http://www.rwjf.org). Follow the Foundation on Twitter at [www.rwjf.org/twitter](http://www.rwjf.org/twitter) or on Facebook at [www.rwjf.org/facebook](http://www.rwjf.org/facebook).

### **Asian & Pacific Islander Caucus for Public Health**

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## **About the Asian & Pacific Islander Caucus for Public Health**

The Asian & Pacific Islander Caucus for Public Health (APIC) is the Vision & Voice for Asian & Pacific Islander Public Health and Health Equity. APIC's mission is to advance the health and health equity of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States, associated jurisdictions, and the diaspora, in affiliation with the American Public Health Association. In years past, APIC has recognized the following luminaries: Vice Admiral Vivek H. Murthy, MD, MBA, US Surgeon General and White House Initiative on AAPIs Co-Chair; Howard Koh, MD, MPH, Assistant Secretary of Health at US DHHS; Congresswoman Judy Chu, PhD, Chair of the Congressional APA Caucus; Kiran Ahuja, JD, Executive Director of the White House Initiative on AAPIs; and Ninez Ponce, MPP, PhD, Director of the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health Center for Global and Immigrant Health.

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