

September 2023

Dear American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) Pediatrics members,

On behalf of APTA Pediatrics DEI Committee we are writing to express our support to those who have been affected by the devastating wildfires on the island of Maui. We recognize that the work is ongoing and just beginning for the future. Our hearts are with the community of Maui and each individual mourning the loss of both lives and livelihoods.

With much of the damage affecting the island's West side, including the historic city of Lahaina, we want to acknowledge the Native Hawaiians, Kanaka Maoli, who lost their loved ones and their culture and history. What were once precious artifacts and symbols of these Indigenous People, are now merely memories.

“This disaster is going to impact Kanaka so much more than tourists and colonizer transplants. Kanaka will experience further displacement in our own lands. Wealthy will come and rebuild oceanfront homes, just as they have after every disaster. Our historical buildings, documents, church, etc. are gone forever. This is the birthplace of the Hawaiian Kingdom. The loss is more profound than anyone can imagine” -Dr. Natalee Kehaulani, (Mills College Department Chair, Race, Gender, & Sexuality Studies; Program Head, Ethnic Studies and native Kanaka).

It is also crucial in our continued diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice work to recognize the link between colonization and climate crises. Tourism has encouraged overdevelopment and agricultural clearing, which has caused indigenous species to die and water to be rerouted away from those native to the land (AAPI Women Lead).

We cannot ignore the fact that part of why so much devastation occurred due to the latest natural disaster in Maui county is due to environmental violence, which “is built into the history of the United States. . . not an aberration, but part and parcel of a political-economic system based on racialized extraction of land and labor, including from indigenous peoples. Capitalism depends on control, specifically control of nature. It also relies on the control and abuse of people of color” (Dr. Julie Sze, *Environmental Justice in a Moment of Danger*).

As a group of very diverse individuals who find importance in fostering growth and a sense of belonging to all, we the APTA Pediatrics DEI committee welcome you with open minds and arms to aid in whatever way you can as Maui begins to rebuild. We also encourage you to learn more about how health disparities are impacted by the intersectionalities and interconnections between racism, power, and disaster and listen to the native people of Lahaina as the community begins to rebuild. We wish the native people of Lahaina and the community of Maui courage, strength, and peace in these trying times so that new life can come again.

In Solidarity,

APTA Pediatrics DEI Committee

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Mica Mitchell, PT, DPT

Mercedes Aguirre Valenzuela, PT, DPT

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### Resources

*Environmental Justice in a Moment of Danger* by Dr. Julie Sze

AAPW Women Lead

[https://www.instagram.com/ainamomona/?utm\\_source=ig\\_embed&ig\\_rid=83aca413-58f8-4264-8110-34aa2bb42c74](https://www.instagram.com/ainamomona/?utm_source=ig_embed&ig_rid=83aca413-58f8-4264-8110-34aa2bb42c74)

4 - 'Āina Momona | Moloka'i

Nonprofit organization; A community organization dedicated to achieving environmental health & sustainability through social justice & de-occupying the Hawaiian lands.

[https://www.instagram.com/kakoo\\_haleakala/](https://www.instagram.com/kakoo_haleakala/) Aloha 'Āina 🌿 We're on a mission to protect and preserve the Land and native species of the Hawaiian Kingdom.

<https://www.mauinuistrong.info/>

Donate today:

Maui Mutual Aid Fund -[bit.ly/mauimutualaide](https://bit.ly/mauimutualaide)

Donate directly to families- <https://www.kaainamomona.org/family-donations>

Document with Mutual Aid Resources- <https://tinyurl.com/M45P45XF>

<https://www.kaainamomona.org/social-links>