



UNIVERSITY of HAWAII at MĀNOA  
**NANCY ATMOSPERA-WALCH**  
**SCHOOL of NURSING**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Dr. Deborah J. Mattheus Appointed as the Inaugural Nancy Atmospera-Walch Professor in School Health**

Honolulu, Hawai'i (December 6, 2021) – The Nancy Atmospera-Walch School of Nursing proudly announces the appointment of [Deborah J. Mattheus](#), PhD, APRN-Rx, CPNP, associate professor as the inaugural Nancy Atmospera-Walch Professor in School Health, effective October 1, 2021. This endowed professorship was established in [2021 by Nancy Atmospera-Walch](#) for a nursing faculty who is dedicated to increasing the academic success of Hawaii youth by providing access to health care in public schools. This endowed professor will contribute to the efforts of the [Hawai'i Keiki: Healthy & Ready to Learn Program](#) (HK), a partnership between the nursing program at UH Mānoa and the Hawai'i Department of Education (DOE).

Dr. Mattheus is a tenured associate professor who joined the UH Mānoa Nursing faculty in 2014. She is a practicing pediatric nurse practitioner (APRN) with more than 30 years of experience. She holds a PhD in Nursing from UH Mānoa, a master's degree in nursing from Simmons College, and a bachelor's degree from American International College.

"Deb is an inspirational leader who is wholeheartedly committed to the health of Hawai'i's children," said Mary G. Boland, DrPH, RN, FAAN, retired dean and professor. "She is an expert in pediatric and oral healthcare whose efforts are improving the health of students while ensuring school based learning experiences for health sciences professional students at UH. Dr. Mattheus is a nationally recognized clinician, educator, and researcher whose innovative approaches are changing the delivery of care and education."

**Specializing in School Health**

Dr. Mattheus is a pioneer in improving the delivery of school health and increasing positive oral health outcomes in Hawai'i and across the nation. With her leadership as the HK Program Senior Practice Director, the program is expanding to provide health services to every DOE school in the state.

Program accomplishments include:

- significantly expanded the number of nurses serving the 15 DOE Complex Areas statewide;
- implemented a telehealth program to serve students and families during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- secured funding from the Hawai'i Dental Service (HDS) Foundation to develop and establish a dental sealant program for elementary school children;
- obtained funding from the HMSA Foundation for a school-based immunization program in the Ka'u-Kea'au-Pahoa Complex Area on the Island of Hawai'i; and acquired funding to hire behavioral health APRNs and staff to expand behavioral health services in schools.

### **Funding Impact & Areas of Research**

To date, Dr. Mattheus has secured extramural funding awards in total of \$2.5 million. Her current projects, federally funded grants and research addresses the vulnerability of children with a focus on oral health, dental sealants, school-based health centers, telehealth, and expanding the oral health workforce.

As a co-principal investigator, Dr. Mattheus' projects include adolescent research, telehealth education and practice, school immunizations, vaccine intentions, and oral health outcomes for pregnant women and children. Her research and projects have inspired dental hygiene and nursing curriculum redesign and innovation. Most importantly, children in Hawai'i – especially the underserved – have increased access to health services.

### **Teaching Focus**

Dr. Mattheus' teaching focuses on didactic and clinical teaching in the graduate nurse practitioner programs in areas of child health promotion and maintenance, advanced pediatric acute and chronic care, advanced practice clinical, and as the supervising faculty for student DNP projects. At the undergraduate level, she has taught pediatric growth and development in the Department of Dental Hygiene and conducted interprofessional simulation lab practice with students.

### **National Recognition: Oral Health Champion for Hawai'i**

In 2020, Dr. Mattheus was one of six healthcare professionals nationwide selected by the Center for Integration of Primary Care and Oral Health as the Oral Health Champion Hawai'i: 100 Million Mouth's Campaign. She is leading this effort in Hawai'i to incorporate oral health information into program curricula of health profession schools as a blueprint that other states can implement.

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### **About the UH Mānoa Nancy Atmospera-Walch School of Nursing**

UH Mānoa Nancy Atmospera-Walch School of Nursing (NAWSON), the Nursing Capital of the Pacific, is the leader in nursing education and research in Hawai'i with outreach to Asia and the Pacific Basin. We support the mission of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa: to provide an innovative, caring and multicultural environment in which faculty, students and staff work together to generate and transmit knowledge, wisdom, and values to promote quality of life and health for present and future generations. The school offers the BS, master's, and doctoral programs. To reflect Hawai'i's unique cultural diversity and heritage, UH Mānoa NAWSON is committed to increasing the representation of Native Hawaiian and other underserved people in all nursing programs. Visit us at [www.nursing.hawaii.edu](http://www.nursing.hawaii.edu).