

Celebrating AAPI Pioneers in Medicine & Healthcare



Katherine Luzuriaga, MD (1956 –)

Dr. Luzuriaga is a Filipino American physician and pediatric immunologist who was instrumental in finding a cure for AIDS in newborns, when HIV is transmitted to them from their mother. In 2013, Dr. Luzuriaga was named one of Time Magazine's 100 Most Influential People in the World.



Margaret Chung, MD (October 2, 1889 – January 5, 1959)

Dr. Chung became the first American-born Chinese female physician in 1916. She was the only female in her class though she garbed in masculine clothing and called herself "Mike." In the early 1920s, she helped create the first Western hospital in San Francisco's Chinatown and led the OB-GYN and Pediatrics Unit. Dr. Chung also was an integral part of establishing the women's branch of the naval reserves during World War II, paving the way for women's incorporation into the U.S. armed forces.



Chi-Cheng Huang, MD (1970 –)

Dr. Huang is a Taiwanese American hospitalist and pediatrician recognized for his volunteer work with Bolivian children. After recognizing the urgent need for emotional and physical support for thousands of children living on the streets and sewers of La Paz, Dr. Huang founded the Bolivian Street Children Project, a nonprofit devoted to sheltering street children in Bolivia. He is currently the Executive Medical Director within the Wake Forest Baptist Health System in Durham, NC.



Marjorie Mau, MD (1959 –)

Dr. Mau was the first Native Hawaiian to earn the title of "master" physician by the American College of Physicians. She has steered revolutionary research in metabolic disorders among Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. She has a passion for researching health disparities such as diabetes, heart disease, and obesity.



Haing Ngor, MD (March 22, 1940 – February 25, 1996)

Dr. Ngor was a gynecologist and obstetrician in Cambodia before being forced into a prison camp under the Khmer Rouge regime in 1975. During this time he was beaten, tortured and starved, but his medical knowledge kept him alive. He is recognized for his role in aiding refugees and promoting justice in Cambodia. Dr. Ngor escaped in 1979 when Vietnam invaded Cambodia. He worked in refugee camps in both Thailand and Los Angeles.



Anandi Gopal Joshi, MD (March 31, 1865 – February 26, 1887)

Dr. Joshi was the first Hindu and first Indian woman to receive a two-year degree in Western Medicine in the United States from the Women’s Medical College of Pennsylvania, graduating in 1886. Dr. Joshi died of tuberculosis, ahead of her 22nd birthday, before she had a chance to practice medicine. After her death, several researchers continued to write about her and the importance of educating women in India. She is still an inspiration to millions of Indian women who want to make a difference in the medical field.



Abraham Verghese, MD (May 30, 1955 –)

Dr. Verghese is an Indian American physician who began his medical training in Ethiopia. He advocated for the importance of empathy in physician-patient relationships. He attended his medical residency in the U.S., where he advocated for the importance of direct patient interaction and physical examination in diagnosing, and the importance of demonstrating empathy. In September 2016, President Barack Obama awarded Dr. Verghese with the National Humanities Medal.



Kazue Togasaki, MD (June 29, 1897 – December 15, 1992)

Dr. Togasaki was one of the first Japanese-American women to become a doctor in the United States. She graduated first in her nursing class but was unable to find work in her home city of San Francisco because of her race. She decided to move on and attend the Women’s Medical College in Philadelphia. During World War II, Dr. Togasaki was sent to the Tanforan Internment Camp along with other Japanese Americans. She offered her medical services and in one month at the camp, she delivered 50 babies, later delivering more than 10,000 babies in her long career serving the Japanese-American population in San Francisco.



Li-Rong “Lilly” Cheng (1949 –)

“Lilly” is the first certified speech-language pathologist (SLP) of Chinese origin in the United States. She was part of a group of SLPs who made presentations on the AAPI population, which led to the establishment of the Asian Pacific Islander Caucus, a group of speech-language and hearing professionals who have an interest in supporting speech, language, and hearing health in AAPI communities. She is a professor in the Department of Communicative Disorders at San Diego State University.

Sources:

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