



## HVO Volunteers, Partners Recognized for Commitment and Leadership in Global Health

[Washington, DC - April 7, 2026] Health Volunteers Overseas (HVO) is pleased to announce the recipients of the twenty-first annual *HVO Golden Apple Award*. As part of its World Health Day observances and in celebration of World Health Worker Week, HVO recognizes the extraordinary contributions of HVO members, volunteers, and supporters. Each individual honored with this award has demonstrated a commitment to HVO's mission to improve global health through the education, training, and professional development of the health workforce in resource-scarce countries.

The recipients of the 2026 *HVO Golden Apple Award* are: Maggie Dylewski Begis, PhD, MS, RD; Natasha Frost; Paras Goel, PT, DPT, PhD, MBA, MEd, FNAP; Kimberly Jarczyk, PhD, ARNP, CPNP; Damalie Mwoogererwa, RN; Kanu Okike, MD, MPH; Maria Teresa Olivari, MD; Naroth Ret; Peter Rice, MD; Steven Sonnenberg, MD; Phannsy Sroeu; Melanie Thomas, MD.

These individuals have contributed to global health and the HVO mission in a number of ways. Their work includes project assessment, development, and monitoring; advocacy and promotion of HVO's mission; building professional networks that support health workers and facilitate advancements at project sites; cultivation of connections between HVO volunteers and overseas trainees; acquisition and development of educational resources; and teaching, training, and mentoring overseas health workers to expand their knowledge, skills and professional development.

"This year's honorees embody the spirit of partnership, service, and excellence that defines HVO's mission. We are deeply grateful for their leadership and proud to celebrate their lasting contributions to global health," remarked HVO Executive Director, April Pinner, MSPH, RD.

The efforts of *HVO Golden Apple Award* recipients are an integral part of HVO's mission to expand access to care by educating and supporting health workers. By highlighting the achievements and contributions of the *Golden Apple Award* recipients, HVO seeks to demonstrate how education and opportunity for health workers will lead to more people around the world being able to access safe, skilled, and compassionate health care when they need it most.

The HVO Board of Directors established the *HVO Golden Apple Award* in 2006 to recognize and thank the individuals and health educators who make exceptional contributions to HVO and our mission to improve global health. Each year, a handful of individuals - nominated by HVO members, volunteers or leadership, or by our overseas partners - receive the award in recognition of the substantial impact they have had as teachers, advisers, mentors, and leaders.

Since 1950, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the international community have celebrated World Health Day on April 7. The day always focuses on a relevant global health issue, and this year's theme is "Together for health. Stand with science." The theme focuses on celebrating the power of scientific collaboration to protect the health of people, animals, plants, and the planet. For more information on World Health Day, visit the [WHO website](#).

World Health Worker Week runs from April 1-7. The week serves as an opportunity to mobilize communities, partners, and policy makers in support of health workers around the world. It is a time to celebrate the amazing work that they do and to raise awareness of the challenges they face every day. [Learn more about World Health Worker Week](#).

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## ABOUT HVO

Health Volunteers Overseas is a nonprofit organization that seeks to improve global health through education of the local health workforce in resource-scarce countries. HVO volunteers build local capacity by empowering health care professionals with knowledge and skills to address the health care needs of their communities. HVO volunteers are trained health care professionals - physicians, nurses, dentists, physical therapists and others - willing to donate their time and expertise to work side-by-side with their colleagues overseas. Since 1986, HVO staff and volunteers have collaborated with a variety of health institutions to design, develop and implement each HVO project, working toward better patient care around the globe in trauma care, child and maternal health, essential surgery, cancer care, rehabilitation, and more. Visit [www.hvousing.org](http://www.hvousing.org) to learn how you can become part of our global health community.

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