News Release

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HMSA Foundation Funds Colon Cancer Screening for Native Hawaiian Men, and Healthy Aging Education

The HMSA Foundation has awarded $93,300 to support two innovative new UH initiatives that will help improve the quality of life for Hawai‘i’s aging residents, and the health of Native Hawaiian men.

"Keeping Hawai‘i residents in the best health possible is a team effort that requires the combined efforts of individuals, their friends and family members, health care providers, and our community. Part of each person’s responsibility is to proactively do things for themselves and those around them," said Mark Forman, executive administrator of the HMSA Foundation. "The Colon Cancer Screening program helps Native Hawaiian Men learn how to screen themselves through self-testing. The Healthy Aging Online Videos will give family caregivers much needed information so they can support the efforts of their health care providers. Both of these programs focus on the unique needs of Hawai‘i’s population and will help us work together to achieve a healthier Hawai‘i."

$68,300 to UH Cancer Center to Promote Colon Cancer Screening for Native Hawaiian Men

Colon cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death killing nearly 60,000 people in the United States each year. In Hawai‘i, Native Hawaiian men have one of the highest death rates from colon cancer, compared to other ethnic groups. The high mortality rate amongst Native Hawaiian men is due to later stage diagnoses compared to other ethnic groups. Early and regular screening for precancerous colon lesions can prevent nearly 90% of colon cancers. However, Native Hawaiian men have limited access to screening and are not as likely as other ethnic groups to be screened for colon cancer.

HMSA Foundation’s funding supports a program that uses established community-based and culturally-relevant discussion groups to increase colon cancer screening
among Native Hawaiian men. To grow the outreach, participants will be trained so they too can lead groups, and educate other Native Hawaiian men on the benefits of using self-administered colon cancer tests. The enhancement of these peer-led, locally-based support networks will help create a lasting setting to discuss health and social welfare issues among Native Hawaiian men.

"We greatly appreciate the support of the HMSA Foundation. This grant will enable the UH Cancer Center to conduct research designed to sustain and enhance the work of our community partners, including the American Cancer Society and the Native Hawaii Health Care Systems, and potentially reduce the burden of cancer in our state," said Kevin Cassel, assistant professor in the UH Cancer Center’s Prevention and Control Program. The program focusses on Native Hawaiian men on O'ahu and the neighbor islands.

**$25,000 to the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) for Healthy Aging Online Videos**

Hawai'i's older adult population (60+) continues to increase. Between 1980 and 2010, Hawai'i’s older population increased by 139.8% while the total population only grew by 34.2%. With greater life expectancy, this percentage is expected to grow, and by the end of the next decade, Hawai'i will be the #1 state in terms of senior citizens as a percentage of its overall population.

The Healthy Aging online videos will be produced as part of the *Mini-Medical School on Healthy Aging* (MMS), a new initiative at JABSOM. This program was developed by Chancellor Emeritus/Professor of Tropical Medicine, Medical Microbiology and Pharmacology at JABSOM Dr. Virginia Hinshaw. Hawai'i's MMS is unique in that it focuses on healthy aging within the context of Hawai'i’s specific needs, population and culture. Its goal is to provide Hawai'i’s older citizens with information on the best way to maintain health and wellbeing.

The inaugural six-week MMS course featuring a distinguished panel of interdisciplinary speakers was held in Spring 2014 to an audience of over 160 participants. HMSA Foundation’s grant will fund the production of videos featuring selected MMS topics and speakers that will be posted online and made available to community groups.

"The MMS video project will benefit the people of Hawai'i by providing senior citizens, their families and caregivers with ready access to reputable, evidence-based public and medical health information on crucial healthy aging issues on a 24/7 basis via home, library or work computer," said Dr. Virginia Hinshaw. She continued, "This project also provides access to some of our best experts in the state on aging and valuable information on what our seniors need to know and do to remain healthy and enjoy high quality lives."

**The University of Hawai'i Foundation**, a nonprofit organization, raises private funds to support the University of Hawai'i System. The mission of the University of Hawai'i Foundation is to unite donors’ passions with the University of Hawai‘i’s aspirations by raising philanthropic support and managing private investments to benefit UH, the people of Hawai‘i and our future generations. [www.uhfoundation.org](http://www.uhfoundation.org)