News Highlights

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UH CANCER CENTER RESEARCHER WORKING ON NEW TEST TO DETECT BLADDER CANCER WINS $50,000 WEINMAN INNOVATOR AWARD

New test could mean earlier detection of one of the most prevalent cancers in U.S.

HONOLULU – A researcher at the University of Hawaii Cancer Center developing a new test for bladder cancer has won the fifth annual Weinman Innovator Award for Translational Research, an honor that carries a $50,000 prize and recognizes leading edge cancer research with the potential to move into pre-clinical or clinical trials.

Dr. Charles Rosser, a UH Cancer Center urologist who holds both MD and MBA degrees, won this year’s award for his work on a new urine-based test that uses 10 biomarkers to detect bladder cancer. This combined panel of biomarkers has been showing an accuracy rate greater than 85 percent in detecting bladder cancer in early studies. The award reviewers selected Dr. Rosser’s work for its potential to eventually save lives and money, and the award prize money will be used to advance development of the technology.

“This project was deemed to be the most significant translational research project proposed, and if it can be fully implemented it would have profound implications for millions of bladder cancer patients worldwide,” said Dr. Michele Carbone, director of the UH Cancer Center. “The medical community does not yet have an efficient, reliable and cost effective method of detecting early stage bladder cancer.”

Being able to accurately detect bladder cancer is important because bladder cancer has a high rate of recurrence. Up to 70 percent of patients with non-muscle invasive bladder cancer are affected, making it one of the most prevalent cancers in the U.S. The National Cancer Institute estimates nearly 74,700 new cases in the U.S. will be diagnosed in 2014, and nearly 15,600 people will die from it. More than a half million people in the U.S. are bladder cancer survivors.

The Weinman Innovator Award was established in 2010 and is funded through the endowed Weinman Foundation Fund for Innovation, provided by Virginia and Barry Weinman of Honolulu. The award was announced today during this year’s Weinman Symposium at the UH Cancer Center. The symposium brings together Nobel
laureates and other top scientists to discuss scientific research and its impact on people with cancer.

The UH Cancer Center is one of 68 research institutions designated by the National Cancer Institute. Affiliated with the University of Hawai`i at Manoa, the center is dedicated to eliminating cancer through research, education, and improved patient care. Learn more at www.uhcancercenter.org. Like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/UHCancerCenter. Follow us on Twitter @UHCancerCenter.