

# News Release

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## **UH CANCER CENTER PILOT STUDY TO IMPROVE COLON CANCER SCREENING AND PREVENTION FOR NATIVE HAWAIIAN MEN**

**HONOLULU** – No Ke Ola Pono a Nā Kāne (for the good health of Hawaiian men) University of Hawai'i Cancer Center community-based project revealed its 2016-2017 findings in a report to the community. Partnered with Ke Ola Mamo (Oahu's Native Hawaiian Health Care System) and other community organizations the study uses small group community engagement with Hawaiian men to discuss health challenges and provide up-to-date health information.

The purpose of the Kāne Initiative is to look for ways to lower the high rates of illness and early death among Native Hawaiian men and their families statewide.

The UH Cancer Center study had more than 285 men statewide participate in the kūkākūkā sessions. These are small group sessions to talk about general health, colon, lung and oral cancers.

In Hawai'i overall cancer mortality rates are highest among Native Hawaiian men according to the UH Cancer Center's Hawai'i Tumor Registry. They also have one of the highest death rates from colon cancer of any ethnic group.

"The disparity exists because Native Hawaiian men are diagnosed at later stages compared to other groups. Research has demonstrated that community-based social networks may help Native Hawaiian men adopt healthy behaviors including colon cancer screenings," said Kevin Cassel, assistant professor in the UH Cancer Center's Cancer Prevention and Control Program.

The study expanded the use of peer-led, health-activated support groups using the Native Hawaiian traditional practice of the "hale mua" (men's house) to address health disparities among Hawaiian men (kāne). The study also included the use of Fecal Immunochemical Tests (FIT) a test to screen for early colon cancer.

"We are very proud of this project, it emphasizes the commitment the UH Cancer Center has to the Native Hawaiian community," said UH Cancer Center Director, Dr. Randall Holcombe.

### **Study highlights**

- 285 kāne attended at least one session
- 256 (90 percent) kāne made a commitment to improve their health over the next year
- 116 (90 percent) learned something about colon health

- 37 (36 percent) had a colon screening in the past 2 years
- 62 (48 percent) doctors had not suggested a colon test

### **FIT test**

- 102 were age eligible to take a FIT colon test (65 not screened)
- ~ 50 (49 percent) took the test – with one positive results
- 84 percent overall screening rate

### **Session highlights**

- 40 used tobacco, and of those 32 (80 percent) wanted to quit after the session
- 90 percent liked talking about health with other kāne
- 91 percent want to attend another health kūkākūkā<.
- 52 average age of kāne attending sessions

The University of Hawai'i Cancer Center through its various activities, cancer trial patients and their guests, and other visitors adds more than \$54 million to the O'ahu economy. It is one of only 69 research institutions designated by the National Cancer Institute. Affiliated with the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, the Center is dedicated to eliminating cancer through research, education, patient care and community outreach with an emphasis on the unique ethnic, cultural, and environmental characteristics of Hawai'i and the Pacific.

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