Written Testimony in Support of UH Cancer Center funding request

Ruby Mizue <ruby.mizue@gmail.com>  Thu, Jan 28, 2016 at 12:03 AM
To: bor@hawaii.edu

Attached are two written testimonies for the University of Hawai‘i Board of Regents Meeting, Thursday, January 28, 2016, Campus Center Ballroom.

Please provide these statements to the Board on our behalf.

Thank you,
Ruby and Paul Mizue

2 attachments

- Cancer Ctr-BOR-0116 .pdf
  21K
- RMTestimony copy.pdf
  35K
Dear Members of the Board of Regents:

My name is Paul Mizue, a cancer survivor and President of the Hawaii Prostate Cancer Coalition. Our organization’s primary mission is to advocate awareness about prostate cancer to men and their families to reduce pain and suffering. Prostate cancer remains a the second leading cause of cancer deaths for men nation-wide and here in Hawaii.

I am submitting this letter to express my support for the University of Hawaii Cancer Center. My first significant personal experience with the Cancer Center started in July 2013 when members of our Coalition toured the newly constructed facility. In July 2014, I met Dr. Charles J. Rosser, Program Director, Clinical Translational Research Program of the UH Cancer Center. He spearheaded the annual Prostate Cancer Forums at the UHCC in September 2014 and September 2015 for the National Prostate Cancer Awareness month. These forums were extremely valuable for members of our organization and the general public. Presentations were made by UHCC researchers and outside medical specialists on the latest medical development and research, addressing our mutual goals of greater awareness and knowledge about prostate cancer.

The Hawaii Prostate Cancer Coalition and its affiliates wholeheartedly support the continuation of the UH Cancer Center’s research. Clinical research can possibly reveal health breakthroughs for the local populace using available natural products. There is an current Cancer Center clinical study on whether Noni extract, a Pacific plant-based product can be effective against prostate cancer.

I will also give you an example of how a clinical trial can have life altering consequences. Our founding President of the Hawaii Prostate Cancer Coalition and Cancer Center donor, Mr. Phil Olsen, underwent a clinical trial in 2002 in Chicago for advanced prostate cancer. He sustained a favorable immune response to the treatment and he continues to live a full life at age 84.

I doubt whether a mainland research center would undertake studies investigating the impacts of Hawaii’s natural products on our diverse population. In addition, very few individuals like Phil can afford the time and expense to travel to the mainland for clinical trials.

The Cancer Center brings a tremendous value to our community beyond the narrow confines of this building and I continue to be a strong supporter of the Center.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter.

Sincerely,

Paul Mizue
President, Hawaii Prostate Cancer Coalition.
My name is Ruby Mizue, and I am grateful for the opportunity to express my support for the University of Hawai‘i Cancer Center. My own personal relationship with the Cancer Center began over 30 years ago when my uncle was diagnosed with stomach cancer in 1985. In those pre-Internet times, the guidance offered and the information we received helped us understand what might be ahead and prepared us to discuss his treatment options with surgeons and oncologists. We continued to receive valuable information and assistance over the years as other family members were diagnosed with colon, pancreatic, and prostate cancer.

My uncle died at age 62, just one year after diagnosis. His father and half-brother also died of stomach cancer before the age of 70. Last summer my husband and I established the Masami Horio Memorial Fund to support a gastrointestinal pilot study in his memory.

Just one week ago our family members gathered at the Sullivan Center to celebrate the announcement of this award to Dr. Scott Kuwada of the Cancer Center faculty. This pilot study may provide the basis for pursuing larger grants, linking stomach cancer mechanisms with epidemiologic differences in cancer risk among our multi-ethnic population. We learned that Hawaii has among the highest rates of stomach cancer in the nation. The funds from this pilot study will enable Dr. Kuwada to identify molecular risk factors for gastric cancers that could then be used to identify those at high risk who might benefit from gastric cancer screening.

Dr. Kuwada’s research is precisely the kind of study that demonstrates the unique and important role of the Cancer Center in developing methods of preventing and treating cancers that reflect Hawaii’s diverse population. A gastric cancer screening program may one day spare other families from the heartache of lives cut short by cancer.

The benefits provided by the Cancer Center to me and my family for over thirty years are priceless. More importantly, the potential and promise of ongoing and future research must be valued and recognized. I will continue to be an active and dedicated supporter of the Cancer Center and urge the Board of Regents to fully support its request for funding.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.