



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII
CANCER CENTER

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**University of Hawaii Cancer Center One of 10 Recipients
of Jimmy V. Foundation Grant**

\$600,000 will help translate mesothelioma research to medical practice

HONOLULU, HI - The Jimmy Valvano Foundation for Cancer Research has awarded the University of Hawaii Cancer Center a \$600,000 grant to support research on the early diagnosis and treatment of mesothelioma. The Center is one of only ten recipients of the 2012 Translational Grants selected by the Foundation's Scientific Advisory Board.

The grant will be applied to the research efforts of Center Director Michele Carbone, MD, PhD along with co-investigators, Haining Yang, PhD and Ian Pagano, PhD for their proposal entitled, "HGMB1: A Biomarker for Mineral Exposure and Detection of Malignant Mesothelioma."

"We are tremendously grateful to be the recipients of such a highly competitive and prestigious grant," said Dr. Carbone. "It is the critical support needed in our efforts to better diagnose mesothelioma at an early stage and develop new therapies to prevent and treat this cancer."

Mesothelioma is a cancer of the cells that line the chest and abdominal cavities and has most commonly been linked to asbestos exposure. It results in one of the most aggressive types of tumors which the current median survival from diagnosis being just twelve months. However, five percent of patients diagnosed at an early stage have survival rates of five to ten years or more. The identification of this new biomarker for early detection will help shed light on developing novel targets for mesothelioma prevention and therapy.

The V Foundation Translational Research Grant program is designed to accelerate and expedite laboratory findings for direct application to patients. The grant approval process is supervised by the Foundation's Scientific Advisory Board comprised of notable physicians and research scientists from various universities and cancer centers. This process ensures all proposals meet the highest standards of scientific merit and the projects best dedicated to curing cancer are consistently selected.

"Our Scientific Advisory Board selected the 10 translational projects most likely to benefit cancer patients from more than 60 promising proposals," said Robert C. Bast, Jr., MD, Vice President for Translational Research at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center and a member of the Scientific Advisory Board. "These grants are awarded to investigators at centers across the country that are preventing, detecting and treating cancers at several different sites."

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The University of Hawai'i Cancer Center is one of 66 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, and improved patient care. Construction is under way on a new state-of-the-art research center, opening in 2013 to better serve the people of Hawai'i and the Pacific. Learn more about the Center's work at www.uhcancercenter.org.

“HMGB1: A Biomarker for Mineral Exposure and Detection of Malignant Mesothelioma”

Research Aim 1: HMGB1, a biomarker that is highly expressed in mesothelioma, is not expressed in lung cancer. If HMGB1 is only expressed in mesothelioma, pathologist can use the marker to differentiate between lung cancer and mesothelioma at an early stage.

Research Aim 2: To identify the HMGB1 biomarker in a group of insulation workers who have been exposed to asbestos. This aim involves a collaborative study with Dr. Andrew Todd, associate professor in the Department of Preventative Medicine at Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York City. Here they will collect serum samples and send them to be tested at the UH Cancer Center for HMGB1.

Research Aim 3: Continue working with Mount Sinai to follow 40 of the insulation workers with high levels of HMGB1 and use aspirin to see if it will reduce their levels of HMGB1, which will possibly lay the foundation for a future trial to delay and/or prevent mesothelioma among high-risk cohorts.

Research Aim 4: Since humans risk exposure to multiple fibrous mineral types, the fourth objective is to study whether all mineral fibers induce elevation in serum HMGB1, and how it correlates with mesothelioma development by using a mouse model. The data will help better understand and interpret human results.

About The Jimmy V. Foundation

The Jimmy V. Foundation for Cancer Research was founded in 1993 by ESPN and the late Jim Valvano, legendary North Carolina State basketball coach and ESPN commentator. Since 1993, The Foundation has raised more than \$120 million to fund cancer research grants nationwide.

The Foundation awards 100 percent of all direct cash donations and net proceeds of events directly to cancer research and related programs. Administrative and fundraising expenses are paid by the Foundation's endowment. It awards grants through a competitive awards process strictly supervised by a Scientific Advisory Board. For more information on The V Foundation or to make a donation, please visit www.jimmyv.org.