



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Written Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education

February 9, 2010, 2:30 p.m.

By

Virginia S. Hinshaw, Chancellor

And

Michele Carbone, MD, PhD

Director

Cancer Research Center of Hawaii

And

Jerris R. Hedges, MD, MS, MMM

Dean and Professor of Medicine

Barry & Virginia Weinman Endowed Chair

John A. Burns School of Medicine

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HCR 18/HR 9 – EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE CANCER RESEARCH CENTER OF HAWAII

Aloha, Chair Chang, Vice Chair Nakashima and members of the House Committee on Higher Education. Thank you for this opportunity to testify on behalf of House Concurrent Resolution 18/House Resolution 9 expressing strong support for the Cancer Research Center of Hawai'i (Center).

We deeply appreciate the expression of commitment for the Cancer Center, which is so very important for the health and well being of the people of Hawai'i and the Pacific Region. This endeavor is a top priority for the UH Regents, UH System and UH Mānoa and has received focused attention from those groups and the many hospital partners and cancer care givers committed to this effort. As this resolution indicates, significant progress is being made in the critical areas of recruitment, partnership formation, and the construction of a new research facility that will ensure we can deliver the most advanced research and care programs in the decades ahead. That progress has been possible because of the State's support and commitment. The resolution's message underscores the value of sustaining the Center's forward momentum and provides convincing evidence of Hawai'i's commitment to the National Cancer Institute (NCI).

Recently we have been able to recruit a number of new faculty members and a senior administrator to enhance our research efforts. These recruitments, in combination with the formation of a consortium with our local hospitals and the UH Mānoa John A. Burns

School of Medicine (JABSOM), will be instrumental in the development of a strong clinical program, which the NCI has mandated. This critical step will advance our ability to conduct cutting-edge translational research that can be quickly and efficiently transformed into successful treatment and therapy options for the patient.

As the resolution states, we have also made significant progress in the construction of a new facility in Kaka'ako that will provide unified and expanded research space for our current researchers and help us create an outstanding environment to attract talented new investigators to the Center. Both project management and design teams are in place and we are well on our way to breaking ground on the project later this year.

Our activities were recently reviewed by representatives from the NCI and they were impressed with our progress and with the strong support expressed by the legislators with whom they met. While we all acknowledge that there is much more work to be done, the NCI continues to be supportive of our efforts.

As stated in the resolution, the Center's mission is to reduce the burden of cancer through research, education, and service with an emphasis on the unique ethnic, cultural, and environmental characteristics of Hawai'i and the Pacific. Our citizens deserve first-class, state-of-the-art care that is delivered in these islands by researchers and health care professionals who have a constant eye on our own people. Researchers at the Cancer Center, along with members of the JABSOM faculty, have that commitment.

We greatly appreciate the Legislature's message of support for the Cancer Center and for its investment in a healthier future for the people of Hawai'i and throughout the Pacific Region.