



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I  
CANCER CENTER

# Community Outreach and Engagement Office

Focus on Native Hawaiian Communities

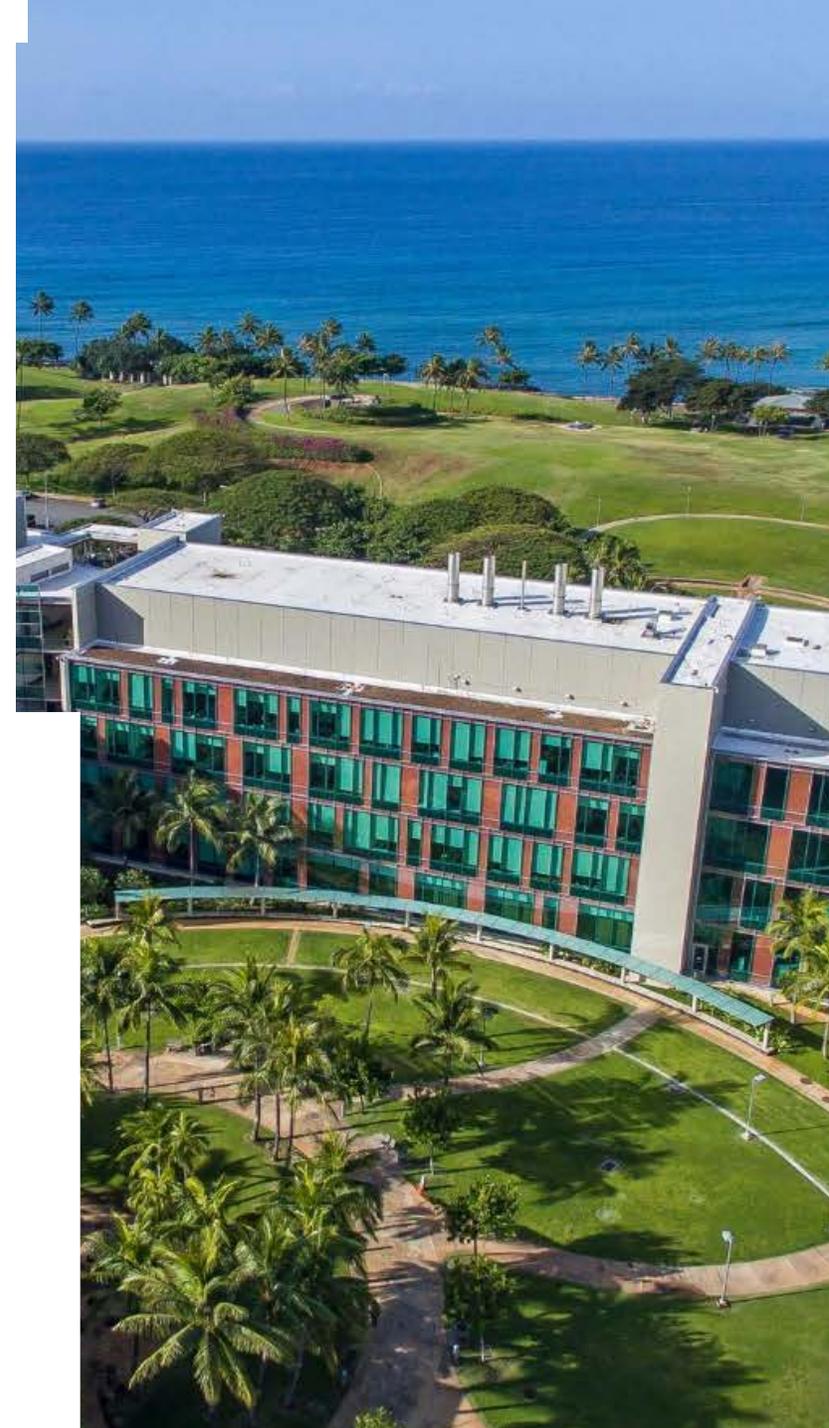
Kevin D. Cassel, DrPH, MPH

Associate Professor, Population Sciences in the Pacific

Associate Director, Community Outreach and Engagement Office



A Cancer Center Designated by the  
National Cancer Institute



# Agenda

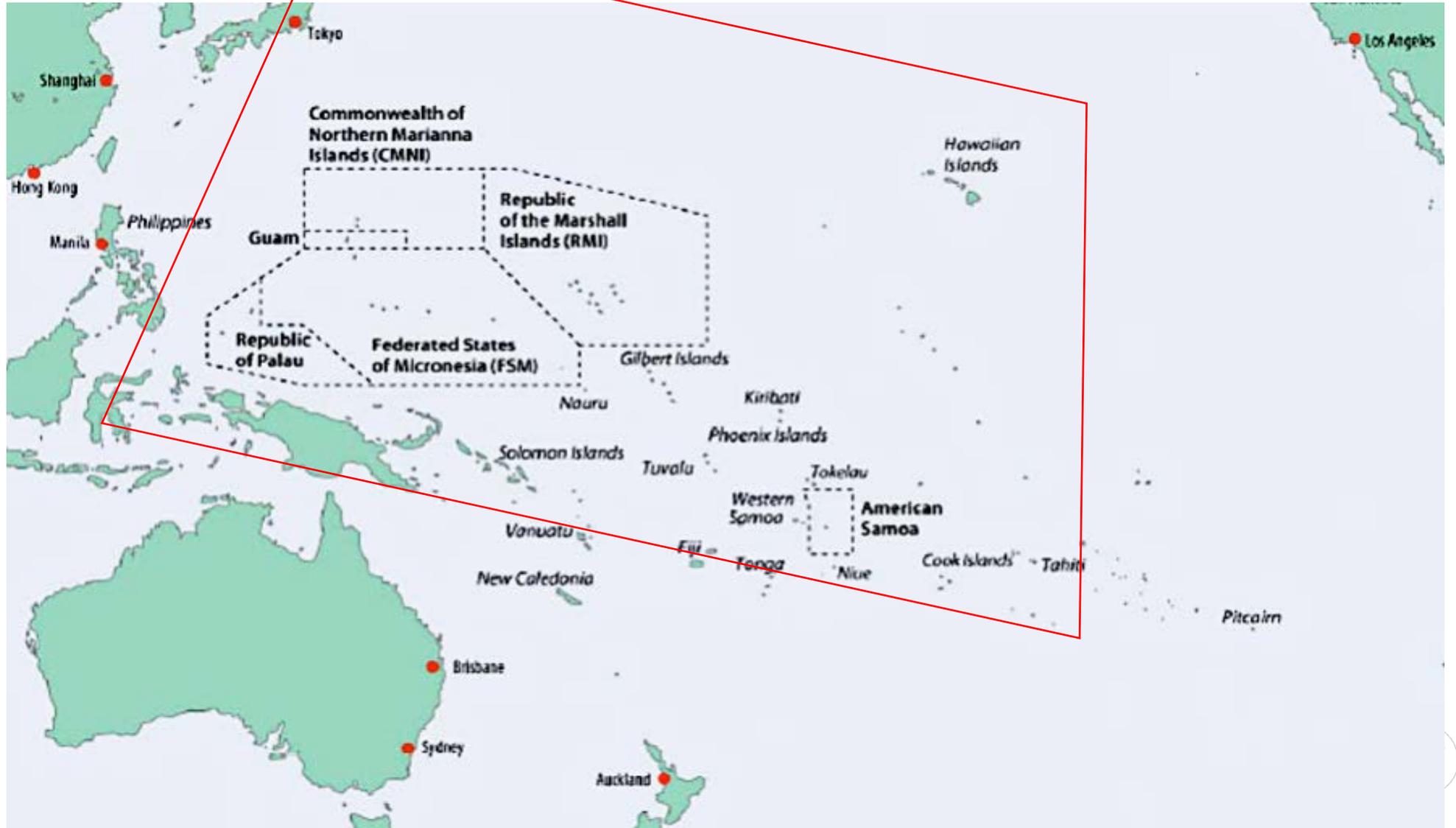
- Brief Background on Hawai'i
- Health Disparities and Causes
- Cultural Renaissance
- Culture as Intervention
- Future Plans and Next Steps



# UH Cancer Center - The Populations We Aim to Impact

Catchment Area:

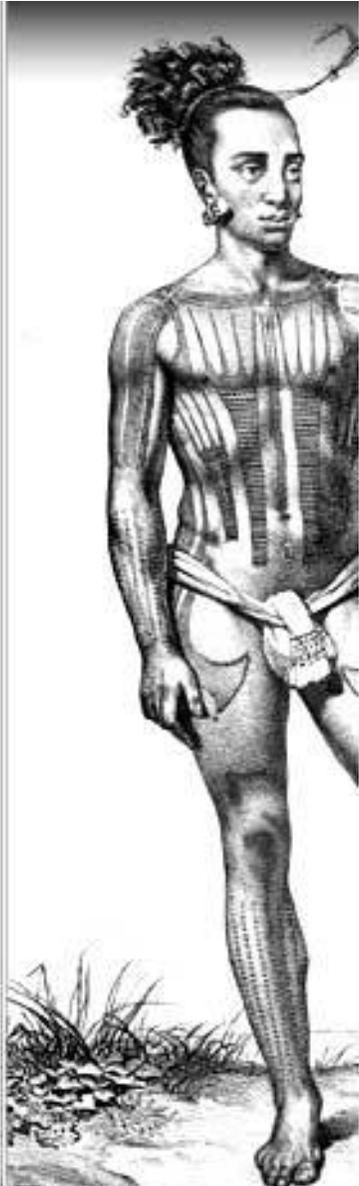
Hawai'i and the USAPI



# Misconceptions about Hawai'i



# Prior to Western Contact



## Oceania – Migrants from Southeast Asia (Lapita Culture)

Selected for long ocean voyages (metabolic efficiency)

Brought indigenous food staples, taro, etc.

## Pre-Western Influence 1700s:

Diseases and natural hazards limited

Cultural practices reduced illnesses

- Meticulous hygiene
- Physically active

Traditional diet was healthy

- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Seafood



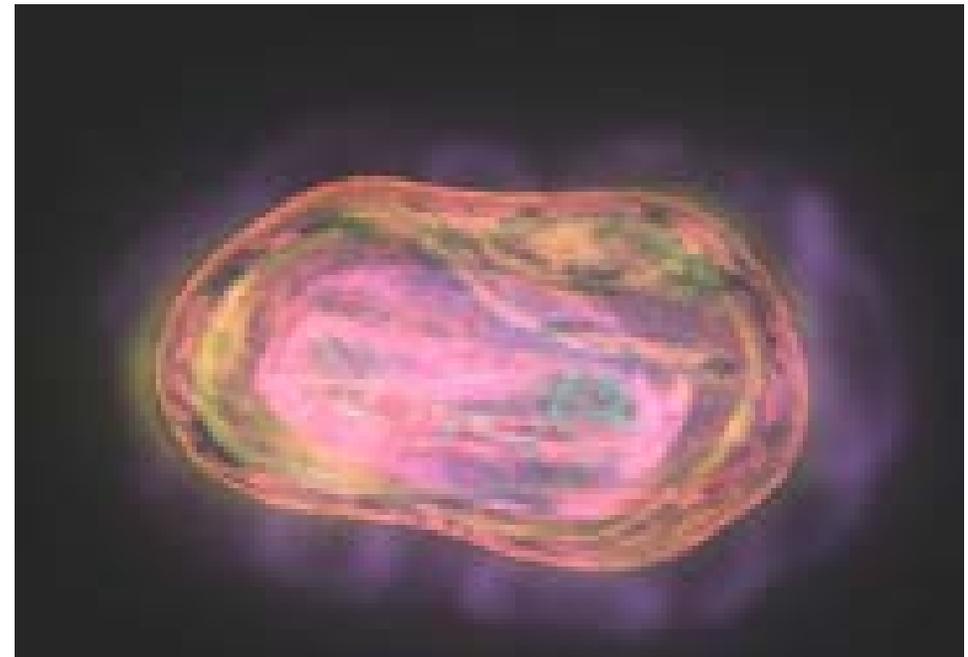
# Post Western Contact - 1722

Infectious diseases decimate 70% to 90% of the populations



Syphilis

(Keighley et al, 2007, Finaui et al. 2002)



Small Pox



# Background

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# Background



# Social and Cultural Determinates of Health

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**Cultural factors contribute to health disparities and include depopulation, subjugation, land dispossession, and the relatively poor social and economic indicators found among Hawaiians including lower incomes, rates of home ownership and education attainment.**



**Myth of Hāloa**

[Blaisdell RK. Historical and cultural aspects of native Hawaiian health 1989. p.1-21 p.](#)

[Look MA, Trask-Batti MK, Agres R, Mau ML, Kaholokula JK. Assessment and Priorities for Health & Well-being in Native Hawaiians & other Pacific Peoples. Honolulu, HI: 2013.](#)



# Health Behaviors

Detrimental health behaviors resulted such as elevated tobacco and alcohol use, diets high in fat and energy



[Blaisdell RK. Historical and cultural aspects of native Hawaiian health 1989. p.1-21 p.](#)

[Look MA, Trask-Batti MK, Agres R, Mau ML, Kaholokula JK. Assessment and Priorities for Health & Well-being in Native Hawaiians & other Pacific Peoples. Honolulu, HI: 2013.](#)



# Underlying Causes of Death in Hawai'i

## 2020 Resident Deaths by Ethnicity

Cause of Death	Native Hawaiians	Total State Population
Cancer <sup>1</sup>	227.0	119.4
Diabetes Mellitus	41.6	16.8
Heart Disease <sup>1</sup>	366.0	171.1
Lower Respiratory Disease <sup>2</sup>	9.6	7.4

↑ 90%  
↑ 140%  
↑ 113%  
↑ 30%

% Higher  
than State

\*Rates age-adjusted per 100,000 based on 2000 US standard population

[1] Hawaii Health Matters. Accessed at <https://www.hawaiihealthmatters.org/> on Jan 23, 2023.

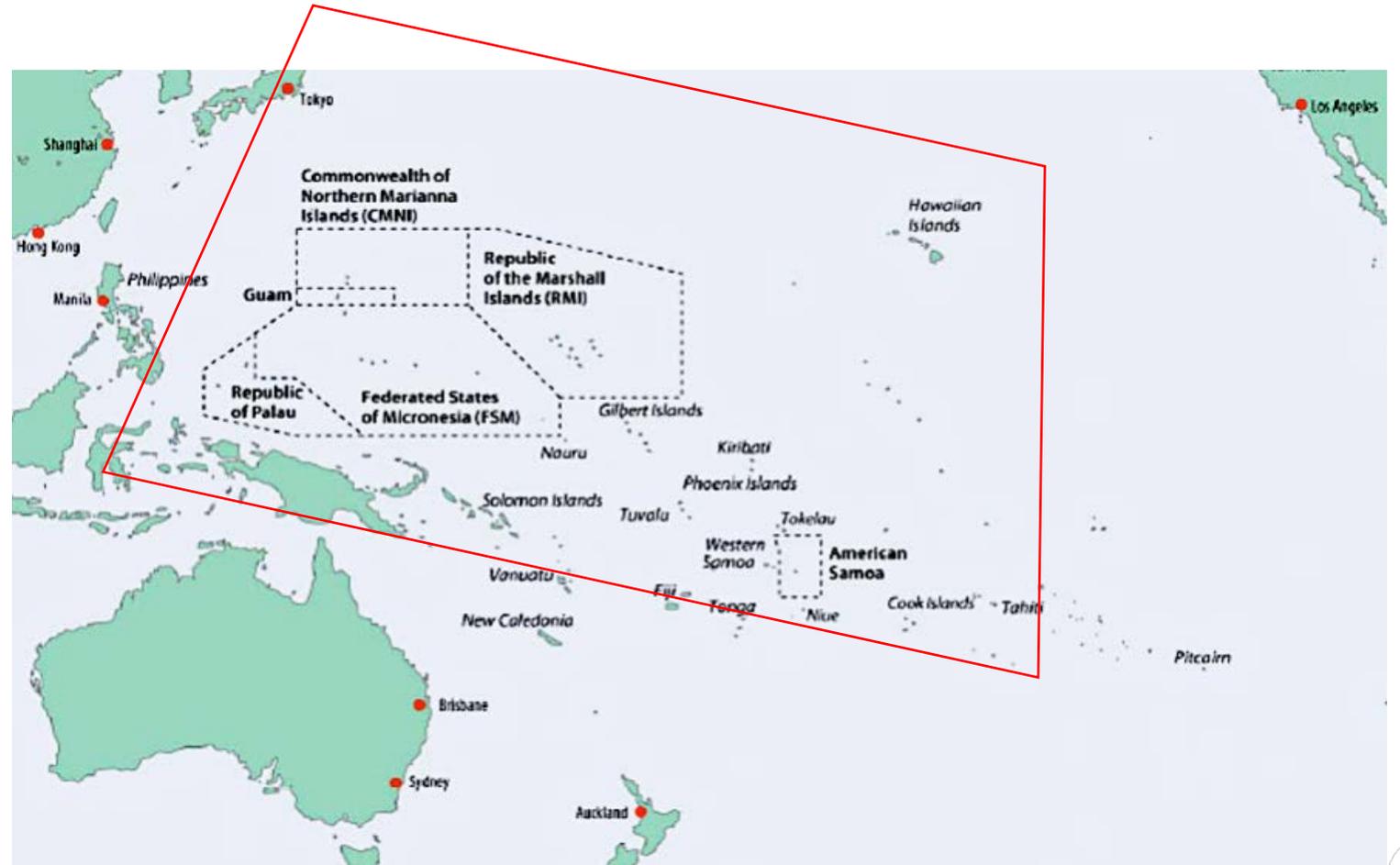
[2] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. National Vital Statistics System, Mortality 2018-2021 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released in 2021. Data are from the Multiple Cause of Death Files, 2018-2021, as compiled from data provided by the 57 vital statistics jurisdictions through the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program. Accessed at <http://wonder.cdc.gov/ucd-icd10-expanded.html> on Jan 23, 2023.



# UH Cancer Center - The Populations We Aim to Impact

## Catchment Area: Hawai'i and the USAPI

Location	Population	Annual Cancer Cases
USAPI	0.60 M	3,000
Hawai'i	1.43 M	7,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.03 M</b>	<b>10,000</b>



# Priority Cancers in Hawai'i

## Cancers more common in Hawai'i

Site	Hawai'i Incidence Rate	U.S. Incidence Rate
Breast (F)	137.5	125.2
Colorectal (M)	48.1	44.4
Endometrial (F)	30.8	26.6
Liver (M)	16.9	12.7
Thyroid (F)	15.9	14.0
Pancreas (M)	13.6	12.3
Stomach (M)	11.2	8.9



### Also considered:

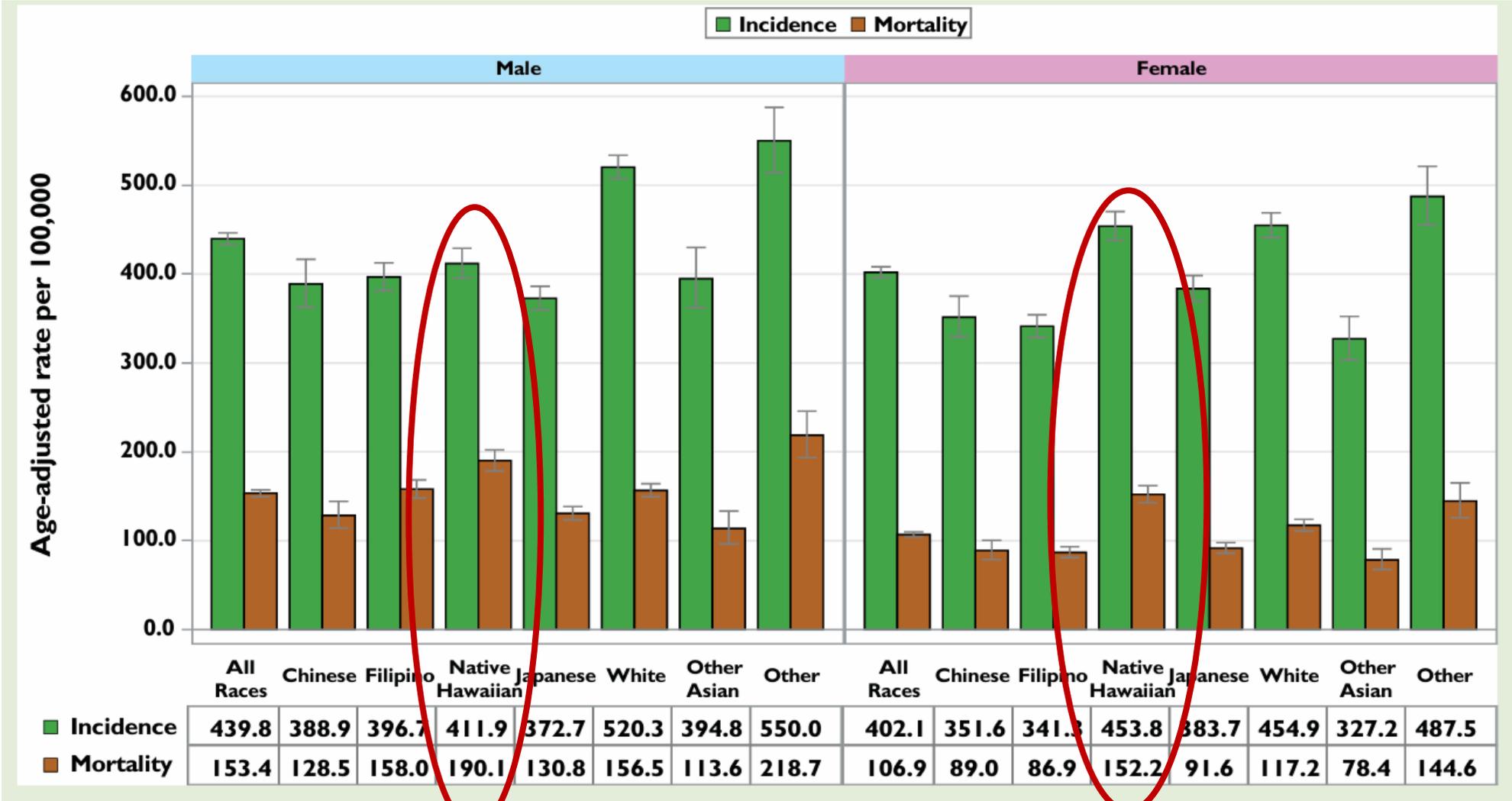
- Community input
- Disease burden
- Disparities
- Investigator critical mass

### High-Priority Cancers

- Lung/Thoracic
- Liver
- Colorectal
- Breast



# Cancer Incidence and Mortality



# Hawaiian Cultural Renaissance

The Hawaiian Cultural Renaissance is generally recognized as having begun in the 1970s.

## •Resurgence of Cultural Identity:

- It was a time of significant revival of traditional Kānaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) culture.

## •Influences:

- The social and political movements of the 1960s, such as the Civil Rights Movement, played a role in inspiring this cultural awakening.

## •Key Developments:

- Revitalization of the Hawaiian language.
- Revival of traditional arts, music, and dance (like hula).
- Increased political activism and advocacy for Native Hawaiian rights.



# Hawaiian Cultural Renaissance

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Native Hawaiian  
Healthcare Act

Resurgence in  
cultural practices  
to promote health

Culture as  
Intervention



# Project Background

***In 1989, Dr. Kekuni Blaisdell emphasized the importance of creating culturally based health services for Native Hawaiians to prevent disease.***

In 2002, the Native Hawaiian Cancer Committee of the American Cancer Society launched the statewide “Kāne Initiative” to:

- 1) examine kāne health-seeking behaviors and attitudes;
- 2) identify barriers preventing kāne from seeking healthcare; and
- 3) develop effective programs for kāne.

From the Kāne Initiative a statewide project in 2008 entitled

No Ke Ola Pono o Nā Kāne (*for the good health of men*), which was composed of kāne volunteers who facilitated kūkākūkā (*discussion groups*) among other interested kāne statewide and offered opportunities for kāne to become Alaka‘i (peer leaders).



# Kū Ola    Upstanding and Principled Living



# Components Kū Ola

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## Native Hawaiian Community Advisory Board



### Objectives:

The role of the University of Hawai‘i Cancer Center’s Native Hawaiian Community Advisory Board is to provide community oversight and input on research conducted at the UH Cancer Center that address the health concerns of Native Hawaiians. The Board also reviews research findings on health and social issues confronting Native Hawaiians to advise on their dissemination in Hawaiian communities.



### Members

- Karl Veto Baker, Kumu Hula, Hālau I Ka Wēkiu
- Reginald Ho, MD, Physician, Straub Medical Center
- Claire Hughes, DrPH, Retired, Hawai‘i State Department of Health
- Jodi Leslie, DrPH, RDN, LDN, Co-owner, Kukui Lifestyle Medicine Clinic
- Debbie Nakanelua-Richards, Director, Community Relations, Hawaiian Airlines
- Nathan Wong, MD, Retired Physician, Kaiser Permanente

### Staff

Faculty, Staff Liaisons – Cassel, Higuchi



# Components Kū Ola

The purpose of Kū Ola formerly No Ke Ola Pono o Nā Kāne is to perpetuate the cultural traditions associated with the hale mua (men's house).

To strengthen the role of kāne in planning and directing family activities to build sustainability and establish stronger and healthier Hawaiian communities.

Our approach is to conduct kāne-led hui kūkākūkā (discussion groups) among kāne.



# Kū Ola – Small Group Education For Men

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Project developed from previous discussions with Native Hawaiian men

Trained men in each community to lead discussions

Native Hawaiian physicians attended to answer health questions

Initial focus on colorectal screening, tobacco use cessation move to cultural concerns and training



# Kū Ola – Small Group Education For Men

## Modules

1. Overview of project - health risks and epidemiology
2. Lung Health
3. Oro/nasopharyngeal or Po‘o and Pu‘u Health
4. Colorectal or Na‘au Health



# Kū Ola – Small Group Education For Men

## New Modules

- Cordage – Kaula
- Prayer – Pule
- Diet – ‘Ai Pono
- Fish Ponds -Loko I‘a
- Prostate Cancer



Dr. Kalani Brady



# Kū Ola – Small Group Education For Men

- 378 kāne
- 43 kūkākūkā (discussion groups)
- 14 community sites statewide

**Colorectal discussion on traditional Hawaiian diet and health. Provided men over 50 opportunity to take FIT**

232 - attended session

149 (64%) over age 50

115 (77%) - agreed to a FIT

59 - tested negative and 2 positive - referred

117 - reported as up-to-date with screening

93% - learned about colon screening/health



# Kū Ola 2023 - 2024

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## Connecting Community with Science

Hālāwai (meetings)

Include families in the improving health discussion

Identify cancer-related topics

- Identify experts to provide information

Determine how meetings are conducted



# Kū Ola 2023 - 2024

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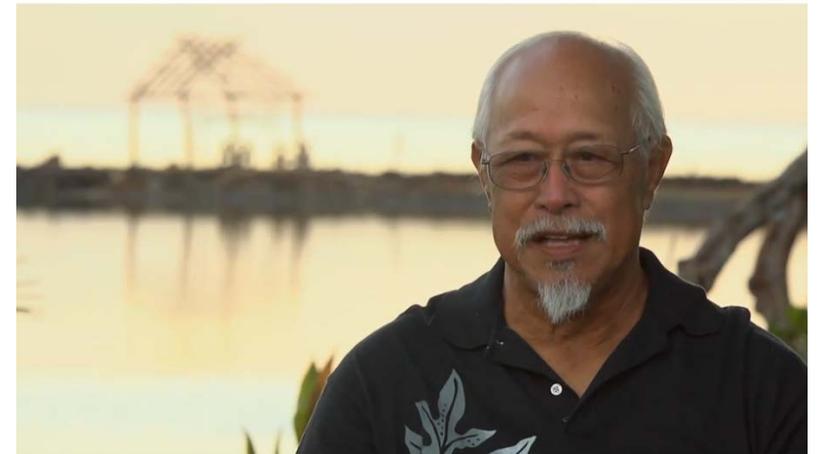
## Building Capacity in Community

Ownership and empowerment

Formal MOUs

Kū Ola can provide support with:

- Capturing kupuna knowledge
- Training
- Education
- Research



# Kū Ola 2023 - 2024

## Opportunities: Building Science in Community



Pilot Project Funding

Clinical Research Associate

Community Partnership MOU



# Kū Ola 2023 - 2024

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**Initiated Biannual  
Cultural Competency Training for all UHCC  
Faculty and Staff by**

**Drs. Carpenter, Kamaka, and Freitas  
Department of Native Hawaiian Health  
John A. Burns School of Medicine  
University of Hawai'i**

This half-day workshop will utilize didactic lectures, small group discussion, role play and experiential learning.



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# Ku Ola – Mobile Clinic Arrived 2023

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# Ku Ola – Mobile Clinic

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# Collaborators



Lili'uokalani  
Trust



HUI NO KE  OLA PONO



KE OLA  
MAMO



HO'OLA LAHUI HAWAII



Papa Ola Lokahi  
Nana I Ka Pono Na Ma



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CANCER CENTER



Hui Mālama  
Ola Nā 'Ōiwi





# Mahalo Nui Loa!

*Any Questions?*



*Scan QR code to learn more  
or visit [uhcancercenter.org](http://uhcancercenter.org)*