

## **Cancer Research Center Of Hawai'i Clinical Trials Program Receives 2009 Clinical Trials Participation Award From American Society Of Clinical Oncology**

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The Cancer Research Center of Hawai'i's (CRCH) Minority Based Community Clinical Oncology Program (MBCCOP) will receive the 2009 Clinical Trials Participation Award from the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) at the organization's Annual Meeting in Orlando, Florida on May 31. Dr. Jeffrey Berenberg, co-principal investigator of the MBCCOP and chief of the Hematology/Oncology Department at Tripler Army Medical Center, will receive the award on behalf of the Cancer Research Center.

"This award is a credit to all the cancer care physicians, nurses, and hospitals who have actively participated in the clinical trials activities of the CRCH. The residents of this state should feel reassured that the cancer care providers in Hawai'i truly believe in offering the newest cancer treatments and prevention strategies to their patients," states Dr. Jonathan Cho, principal investigator of the MBCCOP and a medical oncologist and hematologist with OnCare Hawaii.

The award was established by ASCO in 2001 to increase clinical trials awareness and participation by physicians. From 2003-2008, 63 awards have been bestowed. Award recipients are nominated by the National Cancer Institute's (NCI) Cooperative Groups, community-based oncology research networks, and ASCO's Clinical Practice Committee. The CRCH was nominated by Dr. Lawrence Baker, chairman of the Southwest Oncology Group, one of the oldest and largest cooperative groups in which the CRCH actively participates to provide Hawai'i's citizens access to the latest cancer clinical trials.

Nominations for the award are based on the following criteria: quality community-based research program with high-quality audit reports and investigators in good standing; total patient accrual (registrations); accrual of minority and/or underrepresented populations; increase in level of accrual over the last three years; and a practice that has not received this award in the past five years.

Clinical trials are the research mechanism through which patient care and treatment are improved. Willing and qualified individuals participate in organized studies to find better ways to screen for, prevent, treat, and rehabilitate subjects who may be healthy or afflicted with a disease such as cancer. Nationally the participation rate in cancer clinical trials is 3 to 5 percent among adults and 60 to 70 percent among children. In Hawai'i, adult participation has traditionally been lower at 2 to 3 percent, and higher for children at 80 to 85 percent.

The Cancer Research Center of Hawai'i lacks a clinical facility typically found at major U.S. Mainland comprehensive cancer centers that conduct research and provide patient care through clinical trials. The MBCCOP has reached out to community oncologists and medical centers and implemented strategies to make it easier for them to have their patients participate in clinical trials. These include screening records of newly diagnosed patients to determine eligibility to participate in trials, assisting with counseling of patients and families during the informed consent process, and helping oncologists monitor their patients while on study and updating them on any changes to the studies.

Tremendous efforts are also expended through regular meetings, email communications, and personal contacts to keep oncologists, nurses, and pharmacists updated on the most current information on all active clinical trials. These strategies have helped to significantly improve the level of Hawai'i's clinical trials participation, distinguishing the CRCH to receive the ASCO Clinical Trials Participation Award.

Other cooperative groups in which the CRCH participates are the Children's Oncology Group (COG), NCI's Cancer Trials Support Unit (CTSU), Gynecologic Oncology Group (GOG), National Surgical Adjuvant Breast and Bowel Project (NSABP), North Central Cancer Treatment Group (NCCTG), Radiation Oncology Group (RTOG), and University of Rochester Cancer Center (URCC).

Source

**The Cancer Research Center of Hawai'i**

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