

**IN SUPPORT**

To Committee on Health, Representative Josh Green, M.D. Chair, Representative John Mizuno, Vice Chair, and Committee Members, for Hearing on Wednesday, February 20, 2008, 10:00 A M, in Conference Room 329, at the State Capitol

**RE: HCR 33 URGING THE HAWAII CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY AND OTHER LOCAL HEALTH CARE AGENCIES TO INFORM CLIENTS OF THE COMMON**

From Patricia Urieff, MSW, ACSW, LSW, employed with twenty-four years of experience providing social work services to children and families, including grandparents raising grandchildren. 1959 to 1971 in Hawaii, I had four pregnancies, four children, and was a stay at home mom. Currently, I have five grandchildren. **I am an advocate of government making the health care system do better at giving patients more information for self monitoring.**

My best friend and colleague, a busy social worker, died from ovarian cancer because of no knowledge of early systems. She was from the old school of enduring bodily discomforts. When she did see a doctor, the ovarian cancer was at an advanced stage and she was not saved by chemotherapy treatments. Result is a great loss to the community because she was a very effective social worker who helped families raising children.

For several years I am the one who initiates dialogue about detecting ovarian cancer with my Kaiser gynecologist who has never asked questions related to the early symptoms.

Last Friday, I went with my family to watch my grandson (6 years old) practice Flag Football for two and half hours. Whenever he looked (at me to check if I was still there and if I was watching him practice), I made the *Shaka Sign* to acknowledge him. When practice was over, I sat next to him in the back seat of the car. Without notice, he looked me in the eye and said, "I don't want you to die!" I responded, "OK, I'm going to do my best to stay here". Then his attention turned to other things.

**Hawaii needs its health care system to take action steps to do better regarding initiating dialogue about knowing what are early symptoms and observing self. Thank you for doing all that you can to make it happen within our health care system. Please support this bill.**

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February 19, 2008

The Honorable Josh Green, Chair  
The Honorable John Mizuno, Vice Chair

House Committee on Health  
10:00 AM, Wednesday, February 20, 2008  
State Capitol, Room 329

**RE: HCR 33, Ovarian Cancer; Awareness of Common Symptoms**

Dear Chair Green and Members of the Committee:

Good morning, my name is Leinaala Ley and I am the Director of Government Relations for the American Cancer Society Hawaii Pacific Inc. Thank you for the opportunity to present comments on HCR 33.

HCR 33 urges the American Cancer Society and other local health care agencies to inform clients of the common symptoms of ovarian cancer. **In fact the goal of public education is embedded in the mission statement of our organization which reads:**

The American Cancer Society is the nationwide community-based voluntary health organization dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by preventing cancer, saving lives, and diminishing suffering from cancer through research, education, advocacy, and service.

**I am proud to say that the American Cancer Society already offers a number of community-level programs to help educate the public about cancer risks, early detection methods, and prevention, including ovarian cancer.**

Two of the resources most widely available to the general public are the Society's website and 1-800 number, both of which make cancer information available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days of the year. If you visit our website at [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org) you will quickly find information about the risk factors for ovarian cancer, detection of ovarian cancer, and the symptoms of ovarian cancer that are listed in HCR 33. Our website is robust and user friendly. Similarly, any individual calling into our national call center at 1-800-ACS-2345 will reach an individual, not an automated service, and will be able to talk to a trained specialist who can answer medical questions and connect the caller to the support services available in the caller's own community.

In Hawaii, the American Cancer Society serves the local community through staff housed in seven offices across our state: two on Big Island, three on Oahu, one on Kauai and one on Maui. Our staff works to both promote early detection and prevention of cancer and to serve patients who are currently undergoing treatment. As a representative sample of our activities, our accomplishment so far for our 2008 fiscal year include providing over 1,095 one-way trips for patients to doctor's appointments and reaching over 8,246 individuals with our breast cancer screening message.

As concerns the many different cancers in our community, such as ovarian cancer, questions may arise as to how the American Cancer Society chooses to focus it's time and attention. Nationally, the American Cancer Society has set ambitious goals to reach by the year 2015. The 2015 goals are:

American Cancer Society Hawai'i Pacific, Inc.  
2370 Nu'uuanu Avenue, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817-1714

●Phone: (808) 595-7500 ●Fax: (808) 595-7502 ●24-Hour Cancer Info: (800) 227-2345 ●<http://www.cancer.org>

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1. To reduce cancer incidence by 25%
2. To reduce cancer mortality by 50%
3. To realize a measurable improvement in patient quality of life

Locally, our Hawaii Pacific Inc. Board has added goals which include significantly reducing disparities in healthcare access and healthcare outcomes for Native Hawaiians, Filipinos and Hispanics.

In order to reach these 2015 goals, the American Cancer Society has undergone an inclusive, collaborative and iterative process to prioritize its nationwide work. By identifying the most appropriate organizational leadership roles, the Society can align and leverage finite resources, implement defined and measurable plans and make the greatest possible impact in the fight against cancer. The Society's leadership roles are:

- Supporting better decisions by making available high-quality, timely, understandable information, especially to newly diagnosed cancer patients and their caregivers
- Leveraging ACS' scientific credibility and unique position to support innovative, high impact research – both through direct funding and the ability to influence the amount and direction of research funding from other sources
- Improving cancer patients' quality of life by assisting primarily with service referral, community mobilization, collaboration, advocacy, and, where appropriate, directly providing services
- Increasing prevention and early detection of cancer.

Further information is available by contacting the Society.

In summary, the Society is actively working to fight cancer in Hawaii and welcomes the opportunity to partner with public and private organizations who share a similar mission. **We suggest that HCR 33 be amended to urge not only the American Cancer Society but also primary healthcare providers across the state to inform their clients of the common symptoms of ovarian cancer.** While the American Cancer Society has achieved measurable success in its health promotions message, a primary care physician remains the public's number one most trusted source of medical information and a necessary partner in cancer prevention and detection.

Additionally, September is National Ovarian Cancer Month and Gynecological Cancer Awareness Month. This month is an excellent opportunity to educate the public and we urge the legislature to recognize Gynecological Cancer Awareness Month in the State of Hawaii. Cancer of the uterus is the most common gynecological cancer followed by ovarian cancer and cervical cancer. Combined, these three gynecological cancers will account for approximately 46 cancer deaths in the State of Hawaii this year. All scientifically grounded outreach efforts to educate the public about the prevention and detection of gynecological cancers should be supported and we commend the legislature for taking steps to prioritize cancer prevention and detection in our state.

Sincerely,

Leinaala Ley  
432-9149

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