



LATE

February 23, 2009

Committee on Health  
Representative Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
Representative Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

**Hearing:**

9:30 A.M., Tuesday, February 24, 2009  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 329

**RE: HCR51, REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO  
INCREASE EDUCATIONAL EFFORTS TO PREVENT  
AND ERADICATE CERVICAL CANCER.**

**Testimony in Strong Support**

Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Nishimoto, and members of the Committee on Health. My name is George Massengale and I am the Director of Government Relations with the American Cancer Society Hawaii Pacific Inc. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of HCR51, which asked the Department of Health to “ramp up” its current efforts to expand education about the causes, cures and prevention of cervical cancer.

The American Cancer Society Hawaii Pacific Inc., was founded in 1948, and is a 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. This mission is consistent with the Society’s ambitious 2015 goals of slashing the cancer mortality rate by 50%, reducing the incidence of cancer by 25%, and improving the quality of life of cancer patients and survivors by reducing the pain and suffering that cancer causes.

**Cervical cancer** is malignant cancer of the cervix\_uteri or cervical area. It may be present with vaginal\_bleeding but symptoms may be absent until the cancer is in its advanced stages. Treatment consists of surgery (including *local excision*) in early stages and chemotherapy and radiotherapy in advanced stages of the disease.

According to the US National Cancer Institute's 2005 Health Information National Trends survey, only 40% of American women surveyed had heard of human papillomavirus (HPV) infection and only 20% had heard of its link to cervical cancer. In 2008 an estimated 3,870 women in the US will die of cervical cancer, and around 11,000 new cases are expected to be diagnosed. This year in Hawaii approximately 50 women will be diagnosed with cervical cancer, one-third will die.

Pap smear screening can identify potentially precancerous changes. Treatment of high grade changes can prevent the development of cancer. In developed countries, the widespread use of cervical screening programs has reduced the incidence of invasive cervical cancer by 50% or more.

Human papillomavirus **HPV infection is a necessary factor in the development of nearly all cases of cervical cancer.** HPV vaccine, effective against the two strains of HPV that cause the most cervical cancer, has been licensed in the U.S. and the EU. These two HPV strains together are currently responsible for approximately 70% of all cervical cancers. Since the vaccine only covers some high-risk types, women should seek regular pap smear screening, even after vaccination.

On June 8, 2006, the first vaccine against HPV was approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). On June 29, 2006, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommended the routine use of the HPV vaccine for girls 11-12 years of age and as early as nine at the discretion of doctors, and also suggested that girls aged 13 to 26 receive “catch up” vaccinations. ACIP further recommended that the HPV vaccine be covered under the federal Vaccine for Children (VFC) program. The recommendations of the ACIP were formally adopted by the American Cancer Society in 2007. ([American Cancer Society Guideline for Human Papillomavirus \(HPV\) Vaccine Use to Prevent Cervical Cancer and its Precursors](#))

The Society also recommended that public health policy efforts were needed to ensure that HPV vaccine coverage was available for all females with limited access to health care services. The Society’s guidelines also point out that the need for education was critical.

In theory, if one could vaccinate all females during early adolescence with 1 of the 2 available HPV vaccines, as many as 70% of all cases of cervix cancer might be prevented. Considering the fact that worldwide cervix cancer causes approximately 250,000 deaths each year, the successful implementation of this strategy would have a major favorable impact on public health.

The American Cancer Society is a partner with the Department of Health’s Hawaii Breast and Cervical Cancer Program. We believe that more could be done in the area of education and outreach, especially in our disparate population groups.

We strongly support HCR51, and urge its passage. We would also note for the committee that the Society would also be willing to “ramp up” its education and outreach efforts in support of the Department of Health.

Very truly yours,



George S. Massengale, JD  
Director of Government Relations