



# Cancer Research Center Hotline

## Statewide Comprehensive Cancer Control in Hawaii

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Cancer is the second leading cause of death in Hawaii and the nation. Over 6,000 residents of Hawaii are diagnosed with cancer each year and 1,800 will die from the disease. Although we take pride in having the lowest cancer mortality rate in the nation (161.6 per 100,000 in Hawaii compared to a national average of 206.0 per 100,000), we must not be complacent. We continue to have challenging issues of access for some segments of the population and major ethnic disparities in cancer care and outcome.

Overall, cancer incidence rates are highest in Caucasian men and Native Hawaiian women (Figure 1), but cancer mortality is disproportionately high in our Native Hawaiian population (Figure 2). These statistics reflect disparate utilization of available cancer screening services and our inability to target adequate primary prevention efforts at the Native Hawaiian community. For example, breast cancer incidence in Hawaii is substantially higher among Native Hawaiian women than among Japanese-American women (Figure 3), but the rate of *in situ* breast cancer among Japanese-American women is almost double that among Native-Hawaiian women (Figure 4). These statistics suggest that Native Hawaiian women, with the highest risk of breast malignancy, are not utilizing mammographic screening to the same extent as other ethnic groups.

Aside from issues of ethnic disparities in cancer incidence and mortality, we have a rapidly aging population in Hawaii. Although the overall age-adjusted cancer incidence rates have declined recently in men and have begun to plateau for women, the number of new cancer cases continues to increase (Figure 5). Improvements in cancer care translate to greater survival: the number of people living with cancer is expected to double by the year 2050.

During the past decade, many individuals and organizations in Hawaii have met to formulate a comprehensive, integrated approach to cancer prevention and control, with better access to care for all segments of the population. Former Governor Cayetano appointed a Blue Ribbon Panel on Cancer Care in Hawaii in November, 1999, to develop a blueprint for this process and goals for the future. The final report of this panel in 2002 recommended the development of a comprehensive cancer control consortium to address the primary prevention of cancer, cancer screening, and the early detection of cancer in Hawaii. Development of an outpatient cancer center for coordinated, interdisciplinary cancer care planning and treatment, and equitable access to clinical trials was recommended. Also addressed were issues of diagnostic and therapeutic access for neighbor island and rural community residents, emphasis on education for healthcare practitioners regarding all aspects of cancer care, including hospice care, and state support for hospice and palliative care not currently covered by Medicare and health plans.

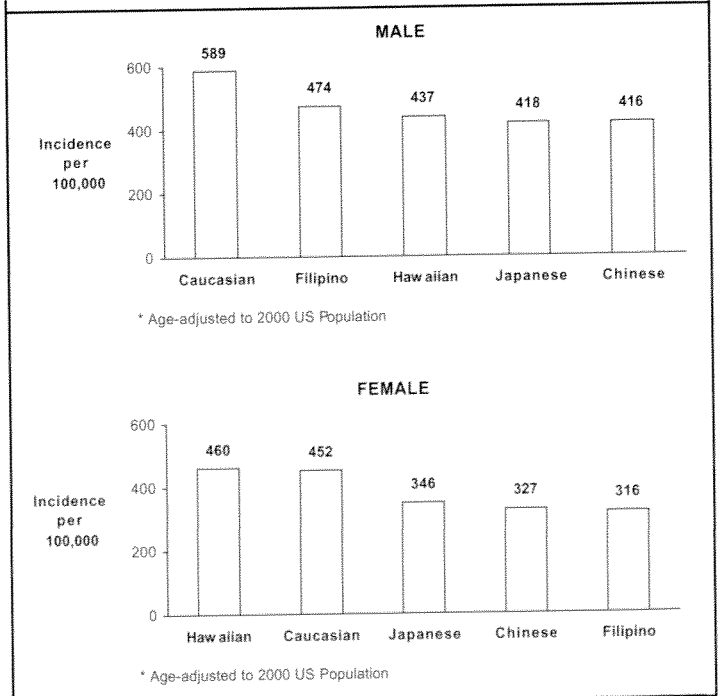
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has been advocating for a comprehensive approach to cancer since 1994. They developed a comprehensive cancer control framework in 1997 and started funding states in 1998. Comprehensive Cancer Control is an integrated and coordinated approach to reducing cancer incidence, morbidity and mortality through prevention, early detection, treatment, rehabilitation and palliation.

In December, 2001 a team from Hawaii attended a Comprehensive Cancer Control Leadership Institute sponsored by the American Cancer Society and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The teamwork from this workshop produced a draft document that assisted the Hawaii State Department of Health in obtaining a Comprehensive Cancer Control Planning grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 2002. This Centers for Disease Control and Prevention grant enabled approximately 50 key leaders from cancer, healthcare, and community organizations throughout Hawaii to convene for a series of four facilitated meetings between October, 2002, and January, 2003. The work of this group is summarized in the forthcoming document "Comprehensive Cancer Control Strategies for Hawaii" that will soon be available for public comment.

As a result of the planning meetings, eight goals were identified that address reducing the cancer burden in our community, increasing cancer screening efforts, improving quality of life in those diagnosed with cancer, and enhancing Hawaii's cancer control infrastructure. For each goal, listed below, there are priority issues and specific tactical recommendations.

**Goal 1:** Whenever possible, prevent cancer from occurring, especially through education and behavior change strategies.

Figure 1.—Cancer Incidence Rates\* for All Sites by Ethnicity in Hawaii, 1995-2000



**Goal 2:** Detect cancer at its earliest stages and assure coordination with cancer management services.

**Goal 3:** When cancer is detected, manage it with the most current and effective treatments available.

**Goal 4:** For cancer patients and their loved ones, assist them in achieving the highest quality of life available to them.

**Goal 5:** Actively encourage and promote research to advance the capabilities in Hawaii for prevention, early detection, treatment, and quality of life.

Figure 3.— Breast Cancer Incidence Rates\* by Ethnicity in Hawaii, 1995-2000

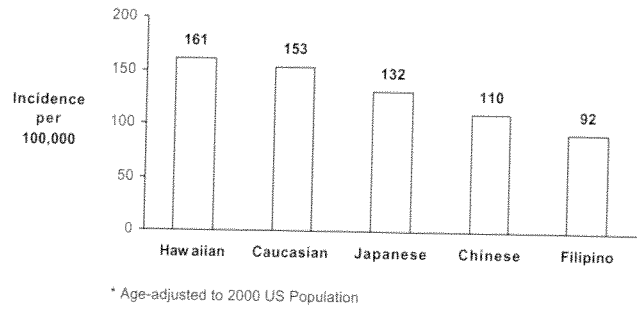


Figure 2.— Cancer Mortality Rates\* for All Sites by Ethnicity in Hawaii, 1995-2000

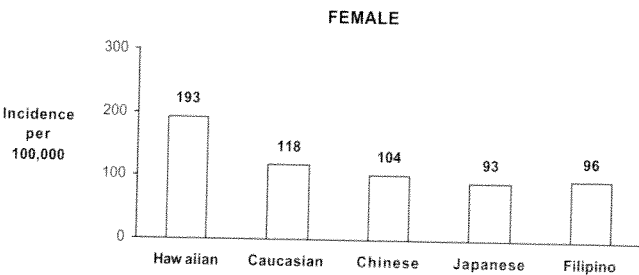
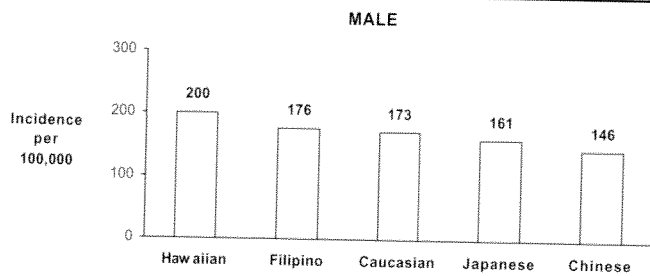


Figure 4.— Breast Cancer Incidence Rates\* by Stage in Hawaii, 1995-2000

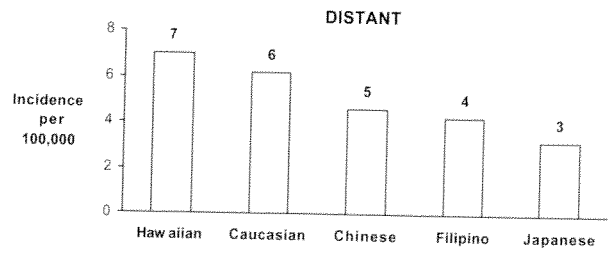
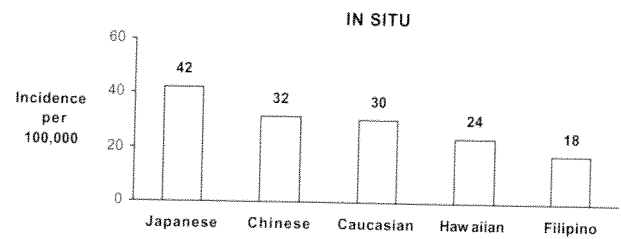
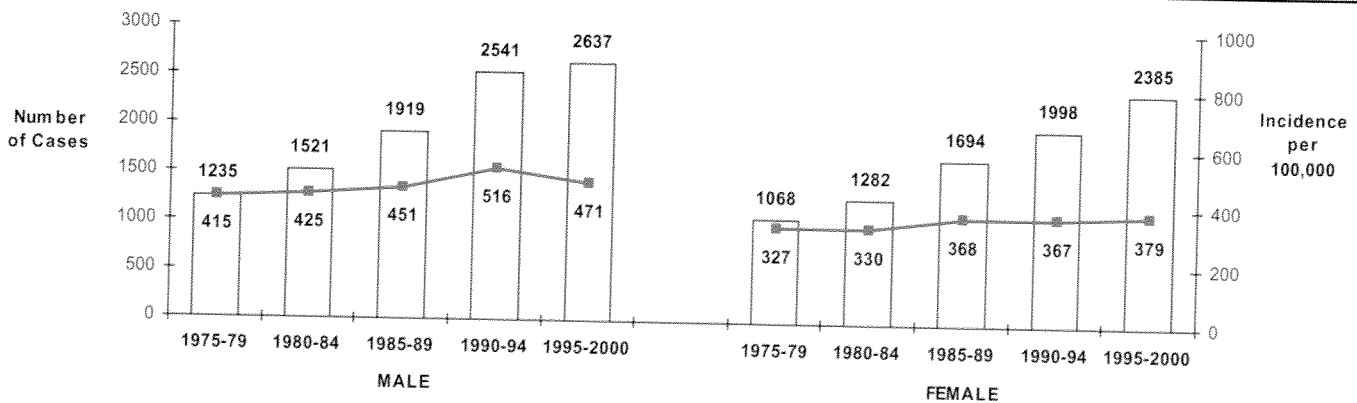


Figure 5. Average Annual Number of New Cancer Cases & Incidence Rates\* in Hawaii, 1975-2000



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**Goal 6:** Improve and maintain a high quality surveillance system on all aspects of cancer to assure informed decision-making.

**Goal 7:** Achieve uniform access to cancer services on each island and within each population group.

**Goal 8:** Address cost and payment coverage issues for cancer-related services.

Guiding principles for Comprehensive Cancer Control in Hawaii include an emphasis on data-driven decision-making, reduction in disparities, and the development of cultural competency in our health professionals. The next steps in the planning process will be to prioritize the action items, and to identify barriers and assign specific tasks for effective and efficient implementation of the plan. It is hoped that citizens of Hawaii will soon benefit directly as a result of coordinated cancer control strategies and medical services.

The National Cancer Institute, the American Cancer Society, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have charged each state with establishing and implementing a statewide comprehensive cancer control plan. We can proudly say that Hawaii is well on its way to achieving this goal. Only with such a collaborative effort of public, private and community interests will we be able to equitably address the growing needs of the people of our state in cancer control.


For information on the Cancer Research Center of Hawaii, visit its website at [www.crch.org](http://www.crch.org).

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