

2015



CALL FOR NOMINATIONS



As recognized by the American Public Health Association

2015 COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION RECOGNITION AWARD

It is with great pleasure to nominate the Cancer Council of the Pacific Islands (CCPI) for consideration for the 2015 Community Organization Recognition Award in recognition of their exceptional leadership and continuous efforts since 2002 in addressing health issues affecting the people in the United States Affiliated Pacific Islands (USAPI). This non-profit organization consists of representatives from the USAPI, which include the Territories of Guam and American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), and the Freely-Associated States of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), and the Republic of Palau (ROP).

Prior to 2004, cancer control efforts were severely lacking in the USAPI, including little community awareness about cancer and lack of screening and diagnostic services. The CCPI, comprised of health leaders in prevention and curative sectors, undertook the 2002 Cancer assessments with the assistance of colleagues at the University of Hawaii and Papa Ola Lokahi. The results provided cancer-related data, identified gaps in cancer programs and services, and identified priorities for the Pacific Regional Cancer Control Plan (CCC) planning starting in 2004. With the CCC funding, local cancer coordinators were hired, community coalitions were created, and comprehensive strategic plans were developed. In 2007, each USAPI jurisdiction was awarded their own CDC 2007-2012 National CCC Program implementation grant, which continues presently and contributed to future applications focusing on broader control of non-communicable diseases (NCD).

While each jurisdiction has had barriers and challenges for effective CCC implementation due to the lack of resources and systems, the CCPI as a whole has had major impact on cancer control activities in the USAPI. The CCPI provides the overall direction as the Advisory Board for the Pacific Regional CCC efforts, and their role is to improve the health and welfare of the people of the Pacific Islands through the development of programs and best practices activities and education, cancer program planning and outreach purposes. Highlights of collective achievements include:

- Cancer Registries are established in the 10 territories and jurisdictions.
- Collaborative CCC and NCD plans and efforts in each jurisdiction, including significant community-level involvement as lay health navigators, health educators, cancer survivor group leaders and training nurses to perform breast and cervical cancer screening
- Promote coordinated efforts among all categorically-funded public health programs to increase healthy nutrition, increase physical activity, and increase community demand for preventive services (such as cervical and breast cancer screening).
- Numerous tobacco-related policies at community and State-levels
- Several templates, toolkits, workbooks, curricula, monitoring and evaluation frameworks and systems. This includes the development of a culturally and resource tailored palliative care program and curriculum due to the lack of treatment services available on the islands.
- Influenced the introduction of the HPV vaccination (school-based in most instances) and continue to advocate for more affordable vaccine costs.
- Supported the development of more resource-appropriate cervical and breast screening standards in the FSM, RMI and American Samoa
- Advocating for US Federal program recognition of numerous challenges to cytology-based cervical cancer screening that resulted in the convening of an Expert Panel and a resulting Committee Opinion #624 by the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ACOG) that “*support adaptation of the World Health Organization recommendations for diagnosis and treatment in one or two visits in the USAPI.*” This ACOG committee opinion paves the way for Federally-funded demonstration projects and other potential US and international funding to determine the most cost-effective and culturally-acceptable methods of screening, especially in jurisdictions with numerous remote islands.

CCPI is considered to be at the forefront of creating a paradigm shift and an effective regional framework in how Pacific systems address NCDs across the USAPI. They are supported and recognized by many national entities including the National Comprehensive Cancer Control partnership and C-Change, Asian and Pacific Islander National Cancer Survivors Network, National Association of Chronic Disease Directors, and Pacific Island Health Officers’ Association. As a result of their efforts, there is interest to replicate the CCPI partnership and systems in the Caribbean islands.

The CCPI deserves this recognition for their outstanding contributions to improve the health and well-being of the people in the USAPI, by speaking with “one voice” against cancer in the USAPI.