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JABSOM FIGHTING CHILDHOOD OBESITY

Kaiser Permanente and HMSA foundations support JABSOM project aimed at helping keiki improve their health

The John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa has received a \$300,000 grant from Kaiser Permanente Foundation to implement programs over the next three years to fight the alarming growth in obesity among Hawai'i's young people.

The grant will fund efforts of the Hawai'i Initiative for Childhood Obesity Research and Education (HICORE), a project of the medical school's Department of Pediatrics. The mission of HICORE is to provide leadership in education and research to better understand and combat the obesity epidemic and to treat and improve the life of children and adolescents with complications of obesity. The grant will assist physicians at Kaiser Permanente Nanakuli and the Wai'anae Comprehensive Health Center to implement and evaluate the Hawaii Pediatric Weight Management Toolkit, an office-based resource developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics Hawai'i Chapter.



“It is estimated that childhood obesity will trigger disease that will threaten or kill many of Hawai'i's obese children before they reach the age of 40,” said Dr. Okihiro.

Kaiser Permanente's grant builds upon a \$419,000 gift last March by HMSA Foundation to help fund personnel and to develop a Continuing Medical Education series on childhood obesity and a website on childhood obesity research in Hawai'i.

“Every year, it becomes more obvious that Hawai'i is witnessing a childhood obesity epidemic,” said Dr. May Okihiro, JABSOM Pediatrician and Principal Investigator for the study grant. “Even though Hawai'i is thought of as a healthy place to live, we are definitely seeing much more childhood obesity.”

For example, a study of 10,199 children entering kindergarten from 2002-2003 in Hawai'i public schools found that 28.5% of the children were overweight or obese. Unchecked, it is estimated that childhood obesity will trigger disease that will threaten or kill many of Hawai'i's obese children before they reach the age of 40.

“We are grateful to the Kaiser Permanente Foundation for its willingness to partner with us in this important endeavor,” said Dean Jerris Hedges. “The need for a comprehensive and collaborative effort to better understand obesity in our young people is critical.”