



## HAWAII

### Journey Together: The Quality of Life Cancer Survivorship Conference

One hundred years ago, people with cancer had little hope of long-term survival. Today, when normal life expectancy is taken into consideration, about two of every three cancer patients are alive 5 years after diagnosis.

In Hawaii, the number of people who were diagnosed with cancer increased from 1975 to 2005, though incidence remained fairly stable and death rates dropped. This means more people are living longer after a cancer diagnosis. As a result, survivorship and quality of life issues have become more important.

One of the goals of the Hawaii State Cancer Plan is to improve the quality of life of cancer survivors. The Hawaii Comprehensive Cancer Control Coalition's (HCCCC) Quality of Life Action Team worked with many partners statewide to address this goal. The team included cancer survivors, patient navigators, national partners, hospitals, and community organizations. Monthly meetings were held to learn what survivors need.



## CONTACT

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The team hosted the Journey Together: The Quality of Life Cancer Survivorship Conference on the island of Oahu to bring cancer survivors and caregivers together to discuss life after cancer treatment. Combining funds with partner organizations, the team offered scholarships for participants from neighboring islands to come to the conference.

In all, 206 survivors, caregivers, nurses, cancer support group members, patient navigators, community cancer partners, and family members attended the conference. In addition to the conference, 125 conference attendees participated in a pre-symposium featuring leading experts speaking on promising cancer research, new cancer therapies, and how science has improved survival.

Feedback from conference attendees was extremely positive. Based on evaluation forms (60% return rate), attendees had high ratings for all eight panel sessions, including aspects of the conference such as how knowledgeable the presenters were and overall quality of presentations.

The HCCCC Quality of Life Action Team gave the evaluations to the planning committee and key partners, who will use the information to create topics for the next annual cancer survivorship conference. Respondents indicated other areas of interest for future conferences, including

- “Need presentations focusing on younger cancer survivors and the mental and physical effects of diagnosis, chemotherapy, and sexuality.”
- “More information on clinical trials. Individuals either don’t know about it or don’t understand the process.”
- “There is much more that must be done to increase survivorship and address the psychosocial needs of cancer patients and their families.”

Attendees voiced a definite need for annual events such as the conference to provide cancer survivorship resources, hope, and inspiration for the people and families in Hawaii affected by cancer. The HCCCC Quality of Life Action Team has already started planning for next year’s annual survivorship conference.

*“Presenters were fabulous!”*

*“Was a very eye-opening, educational experience for me. The presenters were extremely knowledgeable and well spoken.”*

*“Very well done by a nurse who knows what she is talking about!”*

*“Just a lot of helpful, useful information that applies directly to my situation.”*

*“Learned from each presentation. Met many survivors of 10 years. Gives one much hope.”*

*—Feedback from Quality of Life Cancer Survivorship Conference Attendees*