NEW DETAILS OF THE 2016 HEPATITIS A OUTBREAK
An epidemiological investigation reveals details about the 2016 hepatitis A outbreak in Hawai‘i. The investigation confirmed that scallops imported from a single Philippines distributor by a single restaurant chain were associated with hepatitis A illness and therefore the outbreak’s likely source. Of the 292 confirmed cases, only 2 were pediatric cases. Both were adolescents; one had not received the hepatitis A vaccination and the other had not completed the vaccination series. Researchers, including David I. Johnston, MPH, of the Hawai‘i State Department of Health, also found that during the outbreak, more than 100,000 hepatitis A vaccinations were administered in Hawai‘i, a 3.5-fold increase compared with the same period during 2015. There is a pressing need to invest in global food safety, as well as vaccination campaigns, the researchers wrote. The paper, Public Health Investigation and Response to a Hepatitis A Outbreak from Imported Scallops Consumed Raw—Hawaii, 2016, is published in *Epidemiology and Infection*.

HEALTH DISPARITIES IN NATIVE HAWAIIAN KŪPUNA
Health disparities typically widen in older age groups, resulting in the increased need for health and long term service and supports (LTSS) in older populations. Native Hawaiian kūpuna (older adults) face more health disparities than older adults of other ethnic groups. Lead author Colette V. Browne, DrPH, of the Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work, and colleagues conducted a mixed-methods study that included key informant interviews, analysis of survey data, and listening groups. Results showed that kūpuna wanted to age in place with help from their ‘ohana (family), but faced financial barriers. Kūpuna also were unaware of their shorter life expectancy and increased risk of disability. The findings show a need for health education throughout the life course for populations with poor social and health profiles, the researchers wrote. The article, Examining Long-Term Service and Support Needs and Preferences of Native Hawaiian Elders: A Mixed-Method Approach, is published in *Aging and Health*.

CLINICAL PHARMACISTS HELP PATIENTS REACH HEALTH GOALS
Patients with one or more chronic health conditions who receive education and medication management from a clinical pharmacist may be more likely to reach their health goals. Researchers led by Jarred Prudencio, PharmD, of The Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy, conducted a single-center matched retrospective chart review study of 228 adult patients with diabetes. They found that 40% of the patients who underwent the pharmacist-led comprehensive medication management reached the 3 goals of blood pressure control, HbA1c level control, and being prescribed an evidenced-based statin dose. Just 12% of the patients in the control group reached all 3 goals. The findings show that pharmacists should be integrated into primary care teams, the researchers wrote. The paper, The Effect of Clinical Pharmacist-Led Comprehensive Medication Management on Chronic Disease State Goal Attainment in a Patient-Centered Medical Home, is published in the *Journal of Managed Care & Specialty Pharmacy*.

THE SIGNALING MOLECULES OF COLITIS-ASSOCIATED CANCER
About 20% of patients with ulcerative colitis develop colon cancer. Certain proteins and cytokines are thought to be involved in this process, but their exact roles are unclear. New research led by Wen-Ming Chu, MD, of the UH Cancer Center, shows that proteins called G protein alpha i1 (GNAI1) and G protein alpha i3 (GNAI3) suppress cancer development in mice with colitis, while a protein called GNAI2 and the cytokine called interleukin 6 (IL6) promote cancer development. Moreover, tissue samples from patients with colitis-associated cancer show that low GNAI1 and GNAI3 levels and high GNAI2 levels are significantly associated with cancer development. The findings suggest that medications that induce GNAI1 and GNAI3 expression or block GNAI2 and IL6 expression could one day prevent or treat colon cancer in patients with colitis. The paper, GNAI1 and GNAI3 Reduce Colitis-Associated Tumorigenesis in Mice by Blocking IL6 Signaling and Downregulating Expression of GNAI2, is published in *Gastroenterology*.

WHICH SUBGROUPS BENEFIT MOST FROM LONG-TERM METFORMIN?
Among adults at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM) who take metformin, those who benefit most from the drug include those with higher baseline fasting glucose levels, those with higher baseline HbA1c levels, and women with a history of gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM). The 15-year study included more than 2100 adults and was conducted by the Diabetes Prevention Program Research Group, which includes Marjorie K. Leimomi Mala Mau, MD, MACP, FRCP, and John S. Melish, MD, FACP, both with the John A. Burns School of Medicine. Among women with a history of GDM, metformin prevented 4.6 cases of T2DM over 100 person-years, compared with preventing 0.4 cases over 100 person-years in parous women without a history of GDM. The paper, Long-term Effects of Metformin on Diabetes Prevention: Identification of Subgroups That Benefited Most in the Diabetes Prevention Program and Diabetes Prevention Program Outcomes Study, is published in *Diabetes Care*.

RISK FACTORS FOR MILD COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT IN CHINESE OLDER ADULTS
Among Chinese older adults, the risk of mild cognitive impairment (MCI) is strongly associated with older age, lower educational levels, poorer economic status, and multiple chronic diseases. People with MCI are at risk of progressing to Alzheimer disease or other types of dementia. Researchers including Yuanchu Wu, PhD, with UH Public Health, conducted household surveys with 622 adults ages 65 and older living in Wuhan, a city in central China, and showed that overall, 34.1% of participants had MCI. Those with 2 chronic diseases were nearly twice as likely, and those with 3 or more chronic diseases were nearly 2.5 times more likely to have MCI compared with those with no chronic diseases. The study emphasizes that MCI-related health promotion measures are needed in developing countries to target vulnerable populations. The paper, Correlates of Mild Cognitive Impairment of Community-Dwelling Older Adults in Wuhan, China, is published in *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. 

HAWAI’I JOURNAL WATCH
KAREN ROWAN MS

*Highlights of recent research from the University of Hawai‘i and the Hawai‘i State Department of Health*

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HAWAI’I JOURNAL OF HEALTH & SOCIAL WELFARE, JULY 2019, VOL 78, NO 7

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