TRANSPLANT INSTITUTE OF THE PACIFIC CELEBRATES 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF FIRST TRANSPLANT

HONOLULU — Forty years ago, Dr. Livingston Wong was making history. He successfully completed the first kidney transplant in Hawaii, paving the way for the Transplant Institute of Hawaii to give hundreds of patients a second chance at life. On August 9, the Transplant Institute of Hawaii at Hawaii Medical Center East will celebrate this significant milestone by honoring transplant recipients and the surgeons, nurses, and other medical staff who helped make a difference in their lives.

“More than 1,300 people have gotten a second chance at life with successful transplant procedures through the Transplant Institute,” said Dr. Alan Cheung, medical director of the Transplant Institute of the Pacific. “We are proud that our program has touched the lives of so many people over the last four decades. We perform an average of more than 30 transplants each year and hope that we will continue positively impact our community.”

The first successful human kidney transplant was performed in 1954 by a Harvard Medical School team, which included Dr. Wong. He joined the then St. Francis Medical Center in 1966. Sister Maureen Keleher who was well aware of the growing problem of kidney disease in Hawaii, gave Dr. Wong and three fellow physicians permission to start a transplantation program at the hospital. In 1969, Dr. Wong and his team began performing the first kidney transplants in Hawaii. The transplant program grew over the years to include bone marrow transplantation in 1978, heart transplants in 1987, and liver and pancreas transplants in 1993.
“Without support and generosity of the Sisters of St. Francis and the visionary leadership of physicians like Dr. Wong, the Transplant Institute of Hawaii would not be a reality,” added Dr. Collin Dang, chief executive officer of Hawaii Medical Center. “We are honored to carry on the work the Sisters embarked on 40 years ago.”

The Transplant Institute of Hawaii is the state’s only medical center specializing in solid organ transplantation, which includes kidney, liver, heart, and pancreas, as well as cell transplantation, such as peripheral stem cell and bone marrow.

About Hawaii Medical Center LLC
Hawaii Medical Center LLC is a partnership of CHA LLC, a leading U.S. hospital management company, and the over 130 Hawaii-based physicians who form Hawaii Physician Group LLC. It is Hawaii’s only physician-owner hospital and the state’s only for-profit hospital. Hawaii Medical Center is a full-service, acute and tertiary-care hospital system on Oahu with two campuses – Hawaii Medical Center East and Hawaii Medical Center West.

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