



Prestigious International Disaster Management Course Puts UH Medical School on the Cutting Edge

HONOLULU, Hawaii (July 23, 2010) – For the next three weeks, over 30 civilian and military practitioners from over 18 Asia-Pacific countries will join University of Hawaii at Mānoa (UHM) students in a prestigious disaster response course. The course is being executed by the Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (COE-DMHA) in conjunction with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the curriculum provider.

The course provides practitioners the rare opportunity to network with other disaster response professionals, forming relationships that could last a lifetime. These relationships, formed pre-disaster, are a key to improving coordination – something that is oftentimes lacking in disaster responses.

The course is held seven times a year in three different languages around the world. It is held twice in the U.S., with the other host being Johns Hopkins University. Out of the two, COE actively recruits U.S. and foreign military participants to improve civil-military coordination in response.

“Participants are able to engage in problem-solving and relationships that they can call upon during crises in their respective countries,” said Craig Jaques of the Hawai’i-based (COE-DMHA), which is executing the course in partnership with UHM.

Countries represented include Fiji, Indonesia, the Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Taiwan. These mid-level practitioners work at their respective governments, militaries and humanitarian non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Many of the participants move on to high-level positions in their respective agencies, making these contacts invaluable.

A sampling of agencies/organizations represented at the workshop include the Cambodian National Disaster Management Center, the Fijian Ministry of Health, the Thai Ministry of Defense, the Taiwanese National Red Cross, and the U.S. Department of Defense’s Center for Disaster and Humanitarian Assistance Medicine (CDHAM). The course has also attracted three senior medical professionals from Stanford University in California.

Hawai’i is naturally suited to attract participants from around the Asia-Pacific region for the three-week, graduate level course. This year, two graduate students and one professor from the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa (UHM) John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM)’s Office of Public Health Studies and one fellow from the East West Center are receiving academic credit for the course.

“This class provides an excellent opportunity for our students to get world-class training in disaster response,” said Dr. Jay Maddock, Director of the Office of Public Health Studies at UHM, of the course, which was developed by the ICRC in Geneva, Switzerland. “This course will help ensure that our future workforce is well prepared to address a variety of large emergencies that may face Hawai’i, including tsunamis, hurricanes and man-made disasters.”

**UH Medical School Partners in Prestigious
International Disaster Management Course**

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COE has held this course for the past 14 years at the East West Center, but has partnered with UHM in recent years to expand the course's reach.

The ICRC's Health Emergencies in Large Populations (H.E.L.P.) course focuses on public health, ethics, law and policy issues in crisis situations, including natural disasters and manmade conflict, which are designed to enhance the disaster response capacity of professionals around the world.

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The John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM), UH Mānoa, named for a visionary governor, was established in 1965 and has trained more than 4,500 medical doctors through its MD or residency program. Half of Hawai'i's practicing physicians are faculty members or graduates of JABSOM or the Hawai'i Residency Programs. JABSOM also trains Public Health professionals.

More than 3,500 MPH, MS, DrPH and PhD degrees have been awarded from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. In 2010, JABSOM's programs in Geriatric and Rural Medicine ranked in the United State's Top 25 medical programs, according to US News & World Report. For more information about JABSOM, visit <http://jabsom.hawaii.edu>.

The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa serves approximately 20,000 students pursuing more than 225 different degrees. Coming from every Hawaiian island, every state in the nation, and more than 100 countries, UH Mānoa students matriculate in an enriching environment for the global exchange of ideas. For more information, visit <http://manoa.hawaii.edu>.

The Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance, a direct reporting unit to the U.S. Department of Defense, partners with a wide variety of national and international governmental, non-governmental and international organizations. COE was established by the US Congress in 1994 to promote effective civil-military management in international humanitarian assistance, disaster response, and peacekeeping, with emphasis in the Asia-Pacific region.

The H.E.L.P. course was created in 1986 by the International Committee of the Red Cross to upgrade professionalism in humanitarian assistance programs conducted in emergency situations. Since 1986, approximately 2,000 health professionals and humanitarian aid workers from the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, United Nations agencies, NGOs, ministries of health, armed forces medical services and academic institutions have attended the course. The course is conducted seven times a year around the world in English, Spanish and French.