

# Kahala Nui Residents Learn About Polypharmacy, Medication Management

UH Manoa Nursing hosted a public lecture called “Polypharmacy in the Elderly: A Syndrome to Avoid,” at Kahala Nui on Monday, June 9, 2014. Geriatric nurse practitioner and UHM Nursing instructor Valisa Saunders, MN, APRN, GNP-BC, was the guest speaker.



Retirement community residents, staff nurses, and administrators listened intently as Saunders discussed

common problems in polypharmacy or the taking of multiple drugs by a single patient. She said that especially with the elderly, as more drugs are prescribed to treat deteriorating health conditions, increased drug interactions become more common, resulting in the increased potential for health-related problems. “Careful consideration of medicinal combinations by patients, healthcare providers, and pharmacists is key,” said Saunders. “Do your own research, ask questions, and don’t be afraid to get a second opinion.” In doing so, a patient could avoid potentially dangerous side effects.

Saunders also discussed which specific drugs to avoid, side effects, over-the-counter medication and supplements,

inappropriate medication use in older adults, and tips on how to approach your doctor/care provider to discuss medications.

Valisa Saunders, MN, APRN, GNP-BC, is a geriatric nurse practitioner involved in care of Hawaii elderly for over 30 years. Saunders is on a joint appointment with UH Manoa Nursing, and the Hawaii Health Systems Corporation (HHSC) at Leahi and Maluhia Long Term Care Hospitals. She is also an adjunct instructor in the department of geriatrics at the UH John A. Burns School of Medicine. Saunders regularly teaches nurse practitioner graduate and doctoral students, geriatric physicians, and long term care RNs.

The UH Manoa Nursing Public Lecture Series is supported by the faculty and staff at UH Manoa Nursing. The purpose is to provide speakers to educate the community about various healthcare topics. For more information about the UH Manoa Nursing Public Lecture Series, call (808) 956-5219.