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PURDUE EDUCATOR NAMED FIRST UH HILO DEAN OF COLLEGE OF PHARMACY

HILO, Hawai'i – The University of Hawai'i Board of Regents recently announced the appointment of Dr. John M. Pezzuto as founding dean of the University of Hawai'i at Hilo's College of Pharmacy. Pezzuto will assume his new duties on June 1, 2006.

Pezzuto currently serves as dean of the College of Pharmacy, Nursing and Health Sciences and holds the rank of professor of medicinal chemistry and molecular pharmacology at Purdue University, where he has been since 2002.

"I'm very pleased that we were able to attract such a high caliber candidate for this important position," said UH Hilo Chancellor Rose Tseng. "Dr. Pezzuto's extensive experience as an administrator and researcher will enable him to hit the ground running in creating this new College."

Pezzuto earned an A.B. in chemistry from Rutgers University in 1973, and a Ph.D. in biochemistry from the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey in 1977, where he is a distinguished alumnus. He later spent two years as a National Cancer Institute Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Chemistry at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology from 1977-1979.

He began his teaching career as an instructor of chemistry at the University of Virginia in 1979. The following year he joined the University of Illinois at Chicago where he remained until 2002. Originally hired as an assistant professor, he worked his way up to distinguished professor status in the Colleges of Pharmacy and Medicine. He also served twice as head of the Department of Medicinal Chemistry and Pharmacognosy, director of the program for Collaborative Research in the Pharmaceutical Sciences, and associate dean for Research and Graduate Education in the College of Pharmacy. He received a Research Career Development Award and an Alexander von Humboldt Fellowship.

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Active in research, his current interests include natural products as inhibitors of chemical carcinogenesis, biological evaluation of potential cancer chemotherapeutic agents, biospecific isolation of chemotherapeutic agents from plant materials, evaluation of test agents for cancer preventative and therapeutic activity employing animal models.

Pezzuto has been supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) continuously since 1977. He is the author of over 400 manuscripts, the editor of the journal *Pharmaceutical Biology*, the holder of many patents, and a member of several editorial boards. He currently serves as the principal investigator of a Program Project grant in cancer chemoprevention. The studies, which began in 1991, have explored the properties of naturally-occurring substances from land and ocean-dwelling organisms that might prevent or delay the onset of cancer. Funding was renewed this year when Pezzuto's team was granted more than \$6.8 million by the National Cancer Institute to continue their research for another five years.

“While it is difficult to leave the top-ranked school of pharmacy at Purdue, the opportunity at Hilo is very exciting and highly unique,” said Pezzuto. “The level of enthusiasm for the creation of this new college is incredible. We have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to establish a world-class College of Pharmacy that will dramatically improve the profession in this region of the world, while at the same time creating a new center of high level scholarship. I am very pleased the University of Hawai‘i has made this important decision, and delighted to be able to provide leadership in this important initiative.”

The UH Hilo College of Pharmacy will offer a four-year program of study leading to the doctor of pharmacy (Pharm.D.) degree. The school will become the first College of Pharmacy at a public institution in Hawai‘i and the Pacific islands region, and is being designed to meet the comprehensive pharmacy education needs of Hawai‘i and the U.S.- affiliated Pacific islands. As the founding dean, Dr. Pezzuto will oversee fundraising and curriculum development for the new College, as well as the necessary approvals by accreditation authorities.

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