HEAD AND NECK cancers are devastating. Often enough, large, open surgical procedures are necessary to remove tumors, leaving disfiguring incisions even with today’s advanced surgical techniques. These can cause not only significant cosmetic deformity, but also functional ones, such as speech or swallowing. For the people of Hawai’i, the new Queen’s Head and Neck Institute’s goal is to not only eradicate head and neck cancers, but to return people to their life before diagnosis.

Head and neck cancer reconstructive surgeons Christopher Klem, MD, and Daniel Alam, MD, stand within arms reach for six to eight hours at a time in the OR. Usually, Dr. Klem will be busy removing a head or neck tumor, while Dr. Alam is at an arm or leg harvesting tissue. Then they do their magic together, using their considerable talents and the most advanced surgical techniques to restore not only a person’s health, but their life as well. Both physicians are known nationally and have performed groundbreaking procedures (see bios, left).

Head and neck cancers—which include cancers in the mouth, throat, sinuses, and salivary glands—account for only about 5 percent of all cancers diagnosed in the U.S., but the two surgeons are busy. There are about 55,000 cases each year, including more than 300 in Hawai’i. Since opening last fall, they’ve diagnosed and treated over 150 new patients and performed over 500 procedures on 200 different surgical patients. “Because [head and neck cancers] are often diagnosed at late stages, they have significant morbidity and mortality associated with them,” says Dr. Klem. “In addition to these, we’re treating complex and advanced skin cancers of the head and neck, thyroid cancers, [and performing] complex reconstructive surgeries of the head and neck.”

“Every single day we share probably one of the most unhappy moments in somebody’s life,” related Dr. Alam about what he calls the worst part of the job. “When we tell someone that this is your
I am still waiting for you to run away with me! J&J
Donna, Dominic, Dani & Mike,
You guys light up our telephone lines!
Happy Valentine’s Day!
Love, Risa, Kimber, Queen & Kananz
To the QEC ‘Ohana, You are the best! Happy Valentine’s Day. Dr. M
 Aloha Margie, So glad I was able to be there for you, my very first valentine. Happy anni to you and dad. love you always, Gwynne
Thelma, RN, If there ever comes a day when we can’t be together, keep me in your heart, and I’ll stay there forever! Scott, RT
Happy Valentine’s Day to Kehau Kealoha RN at FBU for all her hard work and dedication to help make NHCH a “baby friendly” hospital. You are so patient with all of us and I know I can always count on you for support and advice whenever needed to help our families succeed at breast feeding their little ones: LOVE Heather Yost
To Robin Kalohelani: thank you for being the best boss, I am so thankful to work for you and being here at West. You do bestest! Xoxo, Lei W
To my wife Milla, After 8 years of marriage and 4 beautiful children…Sweetheart — you’re still the one that makes my heart sing and lights up my life every day. Love, Eric B
Tom, Will, Makani & GS:
Roses are red
Violets are blue
You know how much we love you
Gung & Po
Eunice, Thank you all the loving years we spent together and wishing us many more in the future. Te Amo, Hiram
J.W., Words could not describe the joy and happiness you have brought to my world. Thank you for sharing your life with me. Happy Valentine’s Day, Nadine W
Jennifer: You are the calm in my storm and the sun on my face! Through thick and thin, regardless of where we may land or if our lives feel upside down, you are my lighthouse that leads me home! I love you! Randy L
To my best friend Kevin, You are appreciated more than you know and I just want to thank you for being the beautiful person that you are, you love lots! XOXO, Lori P
To the QMC WO Continuing Care Team — I just adore you guys, you are an awesome team to work with and I am so stoked to be here with you all! Xoxo, Lei
To Rehab Services Staff at NHCH: Mahalo nui loa for your loving care of our North Hawai’i ‘ohana! You totally rock the rehab world! Janet Crosier
Dear Fellow Princesses, I hope we continue to work well together and play harder together (lunches, dinner, parties, movies & trips). Thanks for being my friends! J&J

Sending love to my phenomenal Pauahi 6 team; teamwork is a dreamwork! Thank you Cardiac Integrative Wellness team for always making my pts (& myself!!) happier and more relaxed w/your special touch! Hugs to my UHM F’12 rug school classmates… Miss you guys tons! Love, June P. (P6)
To My Forever Valentine, Brion! I love you! Looking forward to many more Valentines together! Love Always, Your wife Lori
To my Heart, Fehd. Happy Valentine’s Day! I love you very much. Always & Forever. LB
To: My Cuddle Bug
I am truly blessed to be a part of your life…… looking forward to spending Forever—Always with you……loving you….infinity and beyond! Always, Your Honey Bee –)
Leah & Raina,
Roses are red, violets are blue, God really blessed me with daughters like you two! Happy Birthday and Happy Valentines Day!
Love Mom

Top Surgeons at Queen’s
Head & Neck Institute
(Continued from page 1.)
Daniel Alam, MD, FACS
Head & Neck Cancer and Reconstructive Surgeon

Before joining Queen’s, Daniel Alam, MD, served at the Cleveland Clinic’s Head and Neck Institute as Section Head of Facial Aesthetic and Reconstructive Surgery and as Professor of Surgery at the Lerner College at Case Western Reserve University.

After graduating from the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine as valedictorian in 1996, Dr. Alam received his surgical training as an intern at Massachusetts General Hospital, followed by residency at the Harvard Medical School’s Combined Hospitals Program in Otolaryngology/Head and Neck Surgery. He then completed a fellowship in facial, plastic, and reconstructive surgery at the UCLA Medical Center and served on its faculty as a clinical instructor in facial plastic surgery before joining the Cleveland Clinic in Ohio. Dr. Alam was the primary microvascular surgeon of the first face transplant procedure in the U.S.

Dr. Alam is a specialist in head and neck reconstructive surgery, including complex microvascular reconstructions to repair major facial injuries and cancer defects. He has developed six new surgical procedures over the past five years, from minimally invasive surgeries for facial paralysis to complex facial reconstruction methods. The success rate of microvascular reconstruction in his section at the Cleveland Clinic was unparalleled nationally.

Serving as a Clinical Professor of Surgery at JABSON, Dr. Alam also holds senior-level academic positions in the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery (AAFPRS). He is the director of an AAFPRS-sanctioned Fellowship in Facial Plastic Surgery, and serves on the organization’s board of directors. Dr. Alam is a member of the AAFPRS National Academic Curriculum Committee, leading the section on facial paralysis and rehabilitation. He also serves on the editorial boards of four major journals.

Thank you for all the LOVE Tower 5 crew! You guys are awesome! Brandie T
Happy Valentine’s Day Joel
I love you, Stacey S
To the West Imaging Dept. It has been a pleasure to work with such a talented and professional team of colleagues. I feel very blessed each day to be a part of such a great team! I appreciate all that you do! Many Blessings to you! Michelle Spencer
I salute my NHCH colleagues on this day of love! I love my job because I know I have a team of committed, caring and willing coworkers to provide top notch patient care with. This commitment starts in leadership and extends out to everyone here. I am so grateful to be a part of NHCH and I LOVE all of you! Happy Valentine’s Day! Corey M
Happy Valentine’s Day to the Admitting and PFS staff! They are friendly, kind, and always ready to lend a hand or just give a smile. They truly demonstrate they are ‘Ohana in how they take care of each other on a daily basis. In turn, they interact with patients and staff with respect and dignity. With so much love, NinaJ
Cobe, Happy Valentine’s Day Bobo! I love you very much! You make me so proud! Love, Mom
To Chad (T6 SW): so glad you are there with the T6 family =) xo xo, LW
To Lettie on Kinua 3, Happy Valentine’s Birthday!! J&J
For all the TLC and continued, non-stop love, loyalty and devotion my darling husband.
I love you 24/7 and 365. Denise P
MOR Staff: Happy Valentine’s Day to my new family! Much love, hugs and kisses! Kelli M-F
To Queen’s Volunteers: To be so dedicated And giving of your time You are all so very special Diamonds in our mine As this day is celebrated With chocolates, flowers and hearts We share with you sincere gratitude And appreciation off the charts! Happy Valentine’s Day!
To the Sweet Nita C of Kinua 3, Happy Heart Day!

Happy Valentine’s Day to Kehau Kealoha RN at FBU for all her hard work and dedication to help make NHCH a “baby friendly” hospital. You are so patient with all of us and I know I can always count on you for support and advice whenever needed to help our families succeed at breast feeding their little ones: LOVE Heather Yost
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J.W., Words could not describe the joy and happiness you have brought to my world. Thank you for sharing your life with me. Happy Valentine’s Day, Nadine W
Jennifer: You are the calm in my storm and
Remembering King Kamehameha IV

KING KAMEHAMEHA IV was born Alexander Iolani Liholiho Keawenui on February 9, 1834. He was a son of the governor of O‘ahu, High Chief Mataio Kekuanao‘a and High Chieffess Kina‘u. On April 7, 1853 (at age 19) he was officially proclaimed heir to the throne of his uncle Kamehameha III, who had no children of his own. When he died on December 15, 1854, Alexander was sworn in as King within the hour. Here are some little known factoids about him:

- Played the flute and piano
- Enjoyed opera and performing in skits at parties
- Read classics such as The Last of the Mohicans in his spare time
- Learned to fence in Paris while still in his teens
- Took boxing lessons from the bare knuckle prize fighter “Yankee Sullivan”
- Went on to law school after matriculation at the Chief’s Children’s School
- Traveled the islands doing land surveying work on horseback
- Established a sheep station (primarily for wool production) on Moloka‘i
- Helped start early coffee and cotton production in Kona
- Loved to get in the lo‘i and work with the kalo plants
- Was a trickster who enjoyed roaming Honolulu in casual dress without his royal retinue

The King was also blessed by being truly loved by his Queen. In the spirit of Valentine’s Day and our LoveLines feature, let us close with an excerpt from one of the many chants that Emma penned for her beloved. (Translated from the original Hawaiian*)

“…Oh my beloved husband
We would rest in the shade of the kukui
In the cold heights of Kilohana mountain
From the heights where the woods are suffused with scent
My dear husband from the rain that patters on the koa leaves
This heaviness shall continue from
the love that exists
The coursing of the rain water of Nu‘uanu
From the abundance of the pili grass
We shared the tie, and you have gone
I am still caring for your love
A thing of boundless affection
that has gone on
Alo! My beloved husband, oh.”


Debbie,
Roses are red, Violtes are blue, Nobody’s Mommy is better than you! Love, Raina

Esther
Kuniau 3: May you have a day with compliments, soft voices, happy workers and all patients in on time. Thanks for your hard work. Happy Heart Day!! J&B

To: Mila Binc, From: Jeanette Oshiro (and Logan, Link and Nate) Happy Valentine’s Day Grandma Mila! We love you and can’t wait for your visit to Molokai! We love you!

Wanted to wish my beloved husband and children a Happy Valentine’s Day. Although Valentine’s comes once a year, everyday is Valentine’s day for all of you. You all inspire my desires in life and create the fire that drives me to excel in what I do best. There is nothing more in life I could ask for. You are all forever my Valentine for eternity. I LOVE YOU, I LOVE YOU, I LOVE YOU! Mommy (J.Sua)

I would like to send out a big Valentine’s mahalo to the grounds department for maintaining all the trees, plants, and flowers that help beautify our campus. JB

Dear Marc, Happy Valentine’s Day to the most special person in my life. Thank you for showing me everyday what true love is all about. I’ll love you always and forever! SR

Beer, Together we fight to save Gotham City All buss’ up, we don’t get no pity Day by day the headaches are real Put on a smile, to hide what we feel No such thing as to quit and to run Because Gotham City is both work and fun Robin

Happy Valentine’s Day to my amazing, hard working, funny, beautiful and uplifting co-workers in the Transitional Case Management Program! & Happy Valentine’s Day to my incredibly supportive, handsome and EPIC husband, and our 6 amazing kids who light up my life every day! ST

Thank you Mike Kaneshio and Andrea Montgomery-Kylie for being my Queens ‘Ohana. You have been a blessing in my transition to Hawaiian Case Management. Love you, your Aussie mate, Noomi XXX

To the love of my life and best friend SY– I love you “Always & Forever!” Happy Valentine’s Day! Kunane

Dearest Sister B, Happy Valentine’s day Sister B. My life wouldn’t be the same without you in it. You are a truly great friend. Love Brother B.

To Robin Kalohelani: Thank you for all that you do. You are truly a blessing and I could not ask for more. Loving kind-hearted person like you. Your words of inspiration and encouragement, your endless support drives me to succeed in my goals. May this Valentine’s Day and any other day reflect how much you are appreciated. My heart is forever indebted to you. Love Always, J.S.

Dear Sorna, My eyes are full of tears that they can no more see. I wish you were here…To chop these onions for me! Love Always, Me.

To Robin Kalohelani: Thank you for all that you do. You are truly a blessing and I could not ask for more. Loving kind-hearted person like you. Your words of inspiration and encouragement, your endless support drives me to succeed in my goals. May this Valentine’s Day and any other day reflect how much you are appreciated. My heart is forever indebted to you. Love Always, J.S.

To my neighbor Liz: You are so special to all of us in the patient access team. Your laugh is unremarkable. You have lifted the morale of your coworkers by getting everyone involved in celebrating birthdays, from making kā, to cards, & birthday cakes. Mai Ka Lani Mai (heaven sent) Cynthia

To: Meko, Cora, Pali and Tans — Words to live by: ‘Friends must be built on a solid foundation of Pinot Noir, sarcasm, inappropriateness, and shenanigans! Happy Valentines Ladies…Here’s to us and our solid foundation of friendship! Xoxo — T

Happy Valentine’s Day to Merlita in Housekeeping! Thank you for your hard work in Honolulua and your always cheerful face! ~ Fern & Karen, Corp Compliance

Anna Banana, We can’t imagine our day without seeing your cheerful smile or hearing your contagious laugh. We wish nothing but love and happiness as you begin your new journey in life. Thank you for all your hard work and memories at Queen’s. You will be missed! Love, Your Endoscopy ‘Ohana

To each of my coworkers and every one of my dear friends in Housekeeping, Food Service, Dietary, Central Transport, Facilities, Biomed, CPD, IT, Creative Services, Receiving and to every other department in QMC, your support, your smiles and your hugs make it a pleasure for me to come to work every day! To all of you, thank you for all you do! Happy Valentine’s Day with love…Jackie L

Happy Valentines Day to the amazing family that is The Queens Medical Center West ER! It wouldn’t be the same without you! –Chris

There are no words that can ever express my Deepest gratitude for taking excellent care Of me when I was seriously ill and for the smiles You put on my face when we have those silly Quirky times. You are the love of my life today, tomorrow, and always. I love you babe! Darlyn C.

Kunane, I wish I could turn back the hands of time. I’d find you sooner & love you longer. With you, Valentine’s day is everyday. Thank you for loving me. I love you, always. Keala

To the QET 4MICU staff: ALL of you are great to work with, fun to be with and most of all the BEST at what you do! Happy Valentine’s Day. Elayne

To my fianc Jeff, you’ve gone beyond your limits all the time and I truly am thankful for having a man like you. Continue to be a hard working, laid back, and genuine man. Thank you for giving time and space throughout our relationship so we can grow as individuals. I am so thankful for what we have, and for everything we will have. Happy Birthday! Happy Valentine’s Day! With all my love, Chantelle B.

Dear Lovie, I love you. Happy Valentine’s Day! Love, Tina xo

To my sweetheart Ralph S: I thank God for giving me you, will you be my Valentine? Lala

To my coworkers in Rehabilitation Services: Mahalo for your support over the years, my second family. Continue the awesome work you do for our patients every day! Wishing you all a very Happy Valentine’s Day! Aloha- Kim Magbu

To my monkey, You got me at Tiffany to mani/ pedi GC’s. But most especially for listening to me vent and helping me with everything. I love you for being there for me, thanks for everything…I love you baby. Yours truly, your BF VF
Face Off With Cancer

(Continued from page 1.)

pathology report—that’s a difficult thing, and we do it on a daily basis. It puts forth a challenge for us. The challenge for us is to make them better.”

One of the goals of the Queen’s Head and Neck Institute is that every patient have an individualized treatment plan for their particular situation and their particular tumor. In addition to the two surgeons, the team consists of radiation oncologists, medical oncologists, neuroradiologists, dentists, pain and palliative specialists, a counselor, and a social worker. There are inpatient and outpatient nurses on the team too, and a top-notch rehabilitative team that includes speech pathologists, physical therapists, and dietitians. All of the team members specialize only in head and neck cancer treatment. “Quality head and neck cancer treatment really mandates multidisciplinary care,” explains Dr. Klem.

“Treatment for head and neck cancer includes surgery, very commonly, but there are also a lot of non-surgical options for many patients, depending on the individualized treatment plan,” he continues. “That can include radiation therapy or chemotherapy, or both.”

One of the new advances in surgical treatment is the use of robotic surgery technology (like Queen’s da Vinci system), which was approved for head and neck cancers by the FDA about three years ago. Robotic surgery provides excellent removal of tumors near critical structures in the throat, where the procedure doesn’t disrupt the swallowing mechanism nearly as much. Dr. Klem cites a 50 year old patient who had cancer of the tonsils. After robotic surgery and six weeks of radiation therapy, he has no problems swallowing. “Our goals are often the same as the patient’s,” he says. “We want to get rid of the cancer and return them to the quality of life that they want to have, hopefully the way they were before their diagnosis.”

“Cancer is traditionally viewed in the light of what needs to be done to cure your cancer,” says Dr. Alam, “but I think what’s lost in that is that we need to rebuild these people’s lives. If we don’t solve that, we’re not going to make them truly better.” An example he cites is a patient who lost about a third of his tongue to a large cancer. To Dr. Alam, just curing his cancer wouldn’t be enough. The patient would have little quality of life—he wouldn’t be able to talk, eat, or have an enjoyable evening out with his family. Dr. Alam took tissue from the patient’s forearm and reused it to rebuild his tongue. Now with a normal looking tongue, the patient can speak and eat normally with no restrictions.

“Technology has changed the way we do things,” says Dr. Alam, who shows a model of an actual Queen’s patient’s face, which was completely devastated by cancer. Thanks to 3D printing technology, which has now come to medicine, Dr. Alam can rebuild a face with tissue transplanted from other parts of the patient’s body. “We take this model,” he explains, “and I make another model where I mimic the good parts. We can cut out the parts [from the model] that we’re going to remove. We take the fibula from their leg (the outer thinner bone of the calf) and rebuild [the face] piece by piece. We can give people that sense of normality despite what they have.”

Dr. Alam notes that their brand of cancer care sometimes hasn’t been done even at top institutions. He cites an example of a patient treated at a world renown institution. They removed cancer in a gland with a nerve that controls your face. “His face was paralyzed,” related Dr. Alam, “and they told him that he should be happy that is face is OK because his cancer was cured.” The two surgeons developed a technique to transplant the little muscle in your neck and hook it up to the nerves and blood vessels in the face to give the patient a chance to smile again. “This highlights what Chris and I believe so strongly,” says Dr. Alam, “that you haven’t taken away the unhappiness of the day you gave them their diagnosis. You’ve simply eradicated some cancer cells. Healing them is about returning them to their life the day before their diagnosis.”

The Queen’s Head and Neck Institute treats more than tumors, including longstanding facial nerve paralysis and head and neck issues caused by tumors in other parts of the body. To learn more about the types of cancers and other head and neck conditions treated, call the Queen’s Head and Neck Institute at 691-7215.

“EARLY DETECTION & DIAGNOSIS for Alzheimer’s Disease, Connecting Providers to Useful Resources” will be presented on Tuesday, February 10, from 5:30 – 7:00 pm at the Queen’s Conference Center. Dinner will be served from 5:00 pm. Featured speakers are Kore Kai Liow, MD, Kamal Masaki, MD, and Pamela Ah-Nee. All QMC medical and professional staff are invited to attend the free presentation. Register with the Continuing Medical Education office at 691-7009 or 691-4406 or by email to cme@queens.org.

CORRECTION: The following Service Award employees should have been recognized for 25 years of service in last week’s issue: Joyce Yaeko Hong, Larie Aiko Kishimoto, Juliesa Sabiniano-Lougney, and Shirley Vergara. We apologize for the error.