The John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) is partnering with the University of Hawai‘i Foundation in sponsoring the new Mini-Medical School on Healthy Aging.

The Mini-Medical School is designed to prepare participants for the second half of their lives. The school will deliver relevant scientific information on aging, similar to what JABSOM medical students learn, but the curriculum will be tailored for a lay audience so that participants can become “mini-medical students.”

The inaugural course is being piloted this spring with a class of UH donors and partners. They will have a chance to learn about healthy aging, evaluate the course’s content and offer input in the development of this new program. Their evaluation will be used to extend the program more broadly to the public.

Virginia S. Hinshaw, Chancellor Emeritus/Professor at JABSOM, says she wanted to create a program that would have a positive impact on the community, particularly our kūpuna. She notes that the geriatrics program is a strength of the John A. Burns School of Medicine and the Mini-Medical School embraces the respect for kūpuna that is so central to Hawaiian culture.

“Our state is in a unique position in that over the next 10 years it will have the highest number of senior citizens as a percentage of its overall population. One-third of us will be 65 years or older,” Hinshaw says. “Since healthy aging is a goal most of us share, we want to provide Hawai‘i’s seniors with information on the best way to maintain their health and well-being.”

The Mini-Medical School is a six-week course on Saturday mornings for two hours. The content includes lectures, panels, Q&A periods, interactive exercises and, yes, even homework.

The speakers are aging experts from across UH Mānoa and will present on a range of topics—from Healthy at 100: Genetic vs Lifestyle Factors to Caregiving and Palliative Care in our Health System—focusing on the keys to healthy aging, which are staying:

- physically active
- mentally engaged
- socially connected

The hope is that the education about healthy living will enable Hawai‘i’s seniors to stay healthy, maintain their independence and potentially reduce their health care costs.

“We want to prepare seniors for the realities of aging—the pros and the cons,” Hinshaw says. “And, we want to provide resources to help along the way.”

To learn more about the Mini-Medical School, visit www.jabsom.hawaii.edu/minimedschool.