

Article URL: <http://starbulletin.com/2008/06/09/news/story04.html>
© 1996-2008 The Honolulu Star-Bulletin | www.starbulletin.com

Star-Bulletin mobile edition

Vol. 13, Issue 161 - Monday, June 9, 2008



CINDY ELLEN RUSSELL / CRUSSELL@STARBULLETIN.COM

Bob Havrilak, 55, has been near death six times with staph infections that started when he was 18 years old.

Victim terms bacteria ‘personal terrorists’

By Helen Altonn
haltonn@starbulletin.com

Bob Havrilak, 55, says he has been hospitalized and near death six times because of staph infections.

When he moved here last fall from Minnesota, he said he realized "I'm in an incubator where bacteria flourishes. It's a wonderful place. Everything grows here - including bugs."

His battle against the bacteria began at age 18 when he broke his nose boxing and it became infected. At age 35 he nearly lost his leg to an infection, which flared up again after six months. His last near-death bout with antibiotic-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* was two years ago, he said.

"I was playing golf and walking in the woods, where my golf balls tend to go, and scraped my shin in my right leg," he recalled. "Three days later I was on a trip, and suddenly I couldn't get out of bed. ... I thought it was the flu."

Two days later he ended up in the hospital - "hours away from dying" - with an infection in his leg, he said.

Over the last several years, he said he began to identify technologies and practices to help protect himself.

"I went from a personal mission to really wanting to help my community," he said. "I cannot sit at a table with people and not find one or more directly impacted by a serious infection."

His search for experts led him to Dr. Alan Tice, a University of Hawaii infectious disease specialist.

Now he is working with Tice on public awareness and education for people at high risk for methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), and they are developing an environmental approach to preventing infections.

He is working at CSG Hawaii, a company that supplies antimicrobial products and technology to control bacteria,

and is on the support staff for the Summer Staph Institute with Mimi Makward and Dr. Lawrence Eron.

He calls drug-resistant staph bacteria "true personal terrorists," adding, "As I got older and this kept occurring every few years, I finally realized the last time, this is crazy. I have to figure out how to prevent them. Prevention is the answer."

[Read all 8 comments »](#)

Type in your comments to post to the forum

**Name
(appears
on your
post)**

Comments

Type the numbers you see in the image on the right:



*Please note by clicking on "Post Comment" you acknowledge that you have read the [Terms of Service](#) and the comment you are posting is in compliance with such terms. **Be polite.** Inappropriate posts may be removed by the moderator. [Send us your feedback.](#)*

Article URL: <http://starbulletin.com/2008/06/09/news/story04.html>
© 1996-2008 The Honolulu Star-Bulletin | www.starbulletin.com