



WORKING TOGETHER TO HELP OTHERS

Please join us for lunch
MONDAY, April 28, 2008

11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Miyama Main Hall, Harris United Methodist Church
Nuuanu Ave. and South Vineyard Blvd.
Ample parking - driveway off Nuuanu Ave.

AGENDA:

11:30 Luncheon: "Mom's Love - Middle East Cuisine" by Husamuddin Akras, Salad, Dessert by Eloise" \$5.00 Donation

11:45 Welcome, Introductions and remarks, Larry Geller, President

12:00 Program: Kat Brady: BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES addressing the need to assist people in rebuilding their lives, restoring their ohana, and revitalizing their communities - how far we've come and how long we have to go still yet. **Brady** serves as Coordinator of the Community Alliance on Prisons, a community initiative working on developing effective interventions for Hawaii's offenders and to improve the quality of justice in Hawaii. She also works to increase public participation into reforming public policy. Her areas of focus include environmental, cultural, gender, juvenile and social justice issues.

1:00 Adjourn

Lunch Host: Diane Stowell

Board meeting: 1 0:00am Preceding Lunch.

THE HAWAII ALLIANCE FOR RETIRED AMERICANS (HARA) SPONSORS

2008 LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

YOU ARE INVITED

"THE GOOD, BAD, AND UGLY"

HEAR ASSESSMENT OF PAST SESSION BY LEGISLATIVE LEADERS:

WHEN: May 21, 8:30 TO NOON

WHERE: STATE CAPITOL, ROOM 325

A free light lunch will be provided.

Key legislators will offer their perspective of the session and ideas for the next session. After their presentation, any member of the audience can suggest issues of concern for their consideration for the 2009 session. Call Laura Manis to reserve a lunch, 597-8838 or email manis@lava.net

NOTES FROM MARCH LUNCHEON MEETING

AARP's Ed Thompson distributed information for members to help them apply for the Economic Stimulus Payment and alerting them to the possibility of scam artists trying to get a piece of it. IRS will mail you the information. The IRS NEVER calls or emails taxpayers asking for personal information. If they need to reach you, they will reach you by mail. Do not give anyone personal information such as Social Security numbers or bank account numbers.

Paul Higa on changes to Medicaid. Because of the high costs for institutional care for long-term care, chances are if you need it, you will end up spending most of your assets and end up on Medicaid. To be eligible for Medicaid your countable assets cannot exceed \$2,000 a month. Exempt from assets are a home below \$750,000 as long as a family member is in residence, 1 wedding ring and engagement ring, household furnishings and clothing, a burial space per family member, 1 funeral plan, motor vehicles used for transportation. There is a look-back of 5 years for transfer of property and other assets with penalties. Effective November 1, all aged, blind and disabled people on Medicaid will be transferred to a managed care plan, either AlohaCare or Ohana Care. These plans must provide all current Medicaid services. For further information call 587-3521, Med-Quest.

WHAT IS THE I-SAVE RX PROGRAM?

The only pending legislation this session to lower the cost of prescription drugs is HB7, the I-Save Rx program. Its purpose is to provide access to safe prescription drugs at affordable prices by allowing Hawaii residents to order the most common brand-name prescription drugs from overseas.

I-SaveRx is an importation program developed by the State of Illinois and available also in Kansas, Wisconsin, Missouri and Vermont. Through this program, consumers use overseas pharmacies to buy the most common brand-name prescription drugs at affordable prices.

The bill directs the governor to enter the appropriate written agreement that authorizes Hawaii residents to participate.

Since July 1, 2006, Illinois has used the pharmacy benefits manager, Pegasus Health Services Ltd., a respected vendor with extensive experience in the international prescription drug services industry. Pegasus has relationships with licensed pharmacies in Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand. Participants have access to the program through an Internet website and a 24-hour toll-free telephone number.

Program participants expect to save 25 to 50 percent on the cost of their medications. This may not be a long-term comprehensive solution to the problem of affordable drugs but will provide residents an interim option. The only cost to the state is the cost of publicizing the program.

As of this writing the bill has passed unamended and should go to the Floor for third reading and then to the Governor to either sign, veto or pass without her signature.

Of course the pharmacy industry opposes the bill, but also a representative of Lillian Koller, Director, Department of Human Services, said it would interfere with their priorities (*pity that saving seniors money has not been a priority*). The Attorney General opposed the bill but now a representative from the AG Office stated: "Nobody in their right mind would oppose lower drug costs."

INSURANCE INDUSTRY AGREES TO END ABUSIVE MEDICARE ADVANTAGE MARKETING

Executives from the health insurance industry and America's Health Insurance Plans (AHIP), their lobbying group, met with members of the Congressional Senate Finance Committee to answer questions about the abusive marketing tactics used to sell Medicare Advantage and Part D plans. As a result of increasing reports of seniors being fraudulently enrolled in the programs and subjected to hard-sell sales pitches, the industry announced support for greater supervision of insurance agents selling to Medicare beneficiaries. Additionally, they agreed to end tactics such as door-to-door sales, cold calls and financial incentives to bribe seniors to switch from traditional Medicare. Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-

MT) applauded AHIP for supporting better oversight, and said he plans to include and expand on the ideas in new regulations. According to *CQ Today*, the new Medicare legislation is expected this spring.

Family Caregiver Awareness Day and Resource Fair at the Hawaii State Capitol on March 14 was a huge success. 50 organizations participated, providing information, help and goodies. Over 750 people attended. Teams of grandparents raising children, senior advocates and caregivers visited legislators to educate them about their problems and talk about their legislative issues. The 2008 Aging Issues booklet was distributed.

Our thanks to Jan Bappe, Rose Ann Poyzer, John Cannell and Larry Geller for staffing our table on the 3rd floor lanai, keeping our papers from blowing away in the wind and dispensing our information to the visitors and legislators alike. And thanks to Lyn Moku, Harry Mattson, Gary Powell and Wes Lum for providing such a productive day.

LONG-TERM CARE IS A KEY ISSUE FOR LIKELY VOTERS

More than 80 percent of likely voters say a candidate's position on long-term care funding will be an important factor in deciding who they will vote for in the 2008 presidential election, according to a study conducted for *Genworth Financial*.

Genworth released findings of a survey of 800 likely voters, which found 60 percent support including long-term care in national healthcare reform, and nearly half are willing to spend more than \$25 per month in taxes or payroll deductions to do so. Nearly 70 percent of respondents admitted they have made no long-term care plans for themselves, their spouses, or another relative, yet 40 percent expect a family member to need such care within the next decade.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Abandoned / Junk Cars (24/7) 532-7700 x 250	Honolulu 768-3621	Pothole Hotline 768-7777
Building Code Compliance 768-8128	Elderly Affairs – city 523-4545	Sewer Trouble 768-7272
Bus Route/Schedule Information 848-5555	Executive Office on aging – state 586-0100	Street Light maintenance 564-6113
Bulky Items 832-7840	Governor's Office 586-0035	Street Sign Repair 768-3644
Complaint (city) 768-4381	Graffiti Hotline 527-5180	T.A.G (Totally Against Graffiti) 252-4005
Dep't. of Emergency Management 723-8960	Mayor's Office 523-4141	Tree Trimming – city 971-7151
Dead Animal Pickup –	Refuse Collection - E. Honolulu 832-7840	Water trouble 748-5010

THIS AND THAT

Pedestrian Safety

The Department Of Transportation has installed 100 countdown traffic lights at 16 intersections on Ala Moana Blvd. From Fort to Piikoi streets to help increase pedestrian safety. They have also adjusted the timing of the lights at the most dangerous crossings as identified by AARP. The Automobile Association of America and DOT are distributing yellow scarves that pedestrians can wave when crossing streets to hopefully avoid being hit by cars. Scarves are available free at the AAA office and at DOT.

Cost of LTC Beds in Institutions

A recently completed survey by the office of the LTC Ombudsman revealed that the average daily rate for a semi-private room in Hawaii is \$276.92. That makes it \$8,307.60 a month and \$99,691.20 a year!

May 10 – Free Shredding event, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m., State Capitol. By AARP and Shredex.



**Kokua Council for Senior Citizens
Education Fund, Inc.**
20 South Vineyard Blvd.
Honolulu, HI 96813
<http://www.kokuacouncil.org>

Return Service requested

WORKING TOGETHER TO HELP OTHERS

Who Are We?

The **Kokua Council** is one of Hawaii's oldest advocacy groups. There is a \$5 annual membership to defer printing and postage costs. At each meeting, topical issues are presented for discussion and possible action. We embrace diversity and extend a special invitation to any senior or intergenerational minded individual interested in advocating for these important issues in Hawaii." All are welcome. **WHEN** 4th Monday of every month, 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. **WHERE** Harris United Methodist Church @ Nuuanu and Vineyard Blvd., Ample parking and a light lunch are provided for \$5. **REACH US** c/o Harris United Methodist Church, 20 South Vineyard, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Mission: "Kokua Council advocates and seeks to empower seniors and other concerned citizens to be effective advocates in shaping the future and well-being of our community, with particular attention to those needing help in advocating for themselves. "

President Larry Geller, 540-1928, lgeller@igc.org
Vice President Tony Lenzer, 261-2095, tlenzer@hawaii.rr.com
Vice President Laura Manis, 597-8838, manis@lava.net
Secretary www.kokuacouncil.org

Treasurer Ed. Fund T.J. Davies tjdavies@juno.com
Treasurer Advocacy Evelyn Shepard 595-4025
General Info Eloise Monsarrat, 839-1545
Newsletter Jeanne Y. Ohta, 373-3186, jyohta@hawaii.rr.com

JOIN KOKUA COUNCIL!

Yes! I want to join Kokua Council. Here are my annual dues and my contact information. I understand that my phone number will be added to the Kokua Phone Tree and I will receive the monthly newsletter and occasional e-mails. Our fiscal year starts in January. Please make checks payable to Kokua Council.

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

___\$5.00

LIFE MEMBER

___\$100.00

ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERS

___\$25.00

DONATIONS _____

Name _____ Phone _____ Fax _____ Email _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Mail to: Treasurer, Kokua Council, Harris United Methodist Church, 20 S. Vineyard Blvd.,
Honolulu, HI 96813