



HAWAII'S VOICE FOR A BETTER FUTURE

Please join us for lunch
MONDAY, March 26, 2007

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: Variety Sandwiches, salad, Dessert by Eloise. \$5.00 donation

11:45 Welcome, Introductions and Remarks, *Larry Geller, President*

12:00 **PROGRAM: The Homeless. : Utu Langi , Director, Kakaako's the First Step Shelter Program and the H5 Program.**

12:45 ANNOUNCEMENTS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING: 10:00 A.M. PRECEEDING LUNCH

NOTES FROM LAST MONTH'S PROGRAM, Current Problems in Nursing Homes, Lynda Johnson

Transferring patients to the mainland is a portend of problems coming fast over the horizon. The fact that by 2020 one in four people will be 60 years or older will dramatically effect the use of social and especially health and medical services. Even though Hawaii has some advantages over the mainland with a higher percentage of older adults living in family settings, there are serious problems when we look at how we will meet the needs of large numbers of the elderly.

The Advertiser article on patient transfers by Queens Hospital points to two issues: bed availability here and a little less apparent, the issues around the type of patients Queens felt they had to transfer.

Beds. We have the lowest number of beds per thousand population over 65. So you shop for beds but in this case you shop for a scarce commodity.

Difficult patients: With waiting lists for any vacancy, nursing homes will select those whose reimbursement is assured, who present no behavior problems, and who require no special treatment for special needs. Especially out of luck because staff has no behavior management training (*see February newsletter about the OASIS program*) or homes have not the special equipment for the care, are geriatric patients and younger, usually male long-term care patients.

Please pay your 2007 Kokua Council Dues. Look at your address label to see the last payment date. Individual dues continue to be \$5.00, Lifetime \$100, Organization \$25. Send payments to Treasurer, Kokua Council, Harris United Methodist Church, 20 S. Vineyard, Honolulu HI 96813. Donations welcome.

President's Letter, *Larry Geller*

Both the Advertiser and the Star-Bulletin have covered the series of crosswalk deaths plaguing Honolulu, including the one recently in Makaha. Of the two stories, reporter Gene Park's piece in the S-B revealed the greater tragedy: the struggle of residents to get the state Dept. of Transportation to take necessary measures to ensure their safety. Neither paper mentioned that the DOT knew of the dangers of this crosswalk but has failed to act to protect pedestrians. In August 2001 a flashing crosswalk system was installed at that intersection, but the system was later removed. The installation was described in a DOT press release at the time.

The AARP survey conducted in May 2006 included monitoring of an intersection near Waianae High School that is one or two away from the Alawa Place scene of the fatal Makaha accident. AARP found that "drivers do not obey traffic signals," that drivers "seem to be speeding," that "car speeds are too fast." The monitors observed "unsafe driver behavior." The monitors also found problems with crossing lights that were too short for people of normal physical ability and other major problems. The same drivers who speed through the monitored intersection zoom through the Alawa Place intersection.

Since the publication of the AARP study it appears that the DOT has done *nothing* to improve the unsafe conditions identified by the AARP. At

testimony at the State Capitol, the best DOT could do was to ask for \$1 million dollars to hire a consultant for a study that would delay action until 2010. Instead of explaining what they will do when questioned by legislators, they consistently explained what they can't (or won't) do.

It's time that the City got serious about enforcing the speed laws already on the books. Drivers would pay attention at crosswalks if they expected they would be ticketed. They'd slow down, too, and obey traffic signals.

A clear message is being sent to drivers: no one is watching you, do what you want. The risk that you'll be caught if you violate speed or other traffic laws day after day, all year long, is so low that it's ok if you do it. An Advertiser front-page story confirms, "57% of Oahu drivers violate crosswalk law." We should not tolerate this. The loss of life on our streets is mostly avoidable. That we do nothing is inexcusable.

Kokua Council calls on the Mayor and the Governor to devise and announce plans to turn this around. There is no budget surplus, dear Governor, if your DOT is paralyzed and unable to do anything unless it gets \$1 million from the legislature. Your surplus is a profit earned by neglecting public safety--on the streets, near the dams, and no doubt elsewhere.

CAREGIVERS DAY AT THE STATE CAPITOL

Celebrate family caregiving and encourage legislators to support them through legislation. Come join us March 21, 9 am - 1 pm, in the rotunda, street level. Kokua Council will have a table as well as other exhibits by organizations involving aging/caregiving services. Also the publication of the 2007 Aging Issues booklet featuring active legislation that support family caregivers will be distributed.

ABOUT A SISTER ORGANIZATION: HAWAII ALLIANCE FOR RETIRED AMERICANS (HARA)

HARA is one of the senior organizations Kokua Council has joined in order to pursue common legislative goals. We have two members who sit on their board, Robert Masuda and Laura Manis. HARA is an official affiliate of the National Alliance for Retired Americans and locally consists of a coalition of union retiree organizations, other nonprofit organizations and individuals. They represent 17,000 people.

HARA is working to ensure that our island community is a good place to retire by supporting the desire of seniors to stay healthy, live independently and lead full, productive lives. Critical issues include expanding local programs that help people stay in their own homes, protecting the rights of nursing and care home residents, reducing cost of prescription drugs, developing a comprehensive family caregiver support program. Anyone wishing more information on membership, meetings, etc., may call Al Hamai, 839-4437.

Problems with a pre-paid funeral plan?

We want to hear your story,

Please call Funeral Consumers Alliance Hawaii 638-5580

LEGISLATIVE SCOREBOARD; BILLS STILL ALIVE HALFWAY THROUGH SB1068 RELATING TO CAMPAIGN SPENDING. Increases amount that may be spent per voter for

state and county election. **HB661** Creates comprehensive public funding for elections to any county council; establishes qualifications, limitations on funding and use of funds, reporting requirements.

HB817 RELATING TO SAGE PLUS. Appropriates funds for operating costs to support and expand the Sage PLUS Program on the neighbor islands.

SB1184 RELATING TO ADULT PROTECTION. Amends dependent adult protective services law by: (1) deleting definition of "dependent adult"; (2) extending protections to persons over 18 years of age if they meet the definition of "vulnerable adult"; (3) enabling the department of human services to investigate and the court to have jurisdiction when reason exists to believe that a vulnerable adult has been abused or is threatened with imminent abuse;

HB1359 RELATING TO THE STATE PHARMACY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. Creates a Hawaii State Pharmacy Assistance program by merging the current State Pharmacy Assistance program which coordinates the Medicare Part D drug benefit and the Hawaii Rx plus program under a single comprehensive Hawaii State Pharmacy Assistance program umbrella. Requires the Department of Human Services to take all steps necessary to enable participation in joint prescription drug purchasing agreements with any other health benefits plan or organization within or outside of this state that agrees to participate in a joint purchasing agreement.

HB825 RELATING TO CAREGIVING. Extends the Joint Legislative Committee on Family Caregiving to June 30, 2008. Expands the focus of the committee to explore a paid family leave program. Provides a broader definition for "family caregiver" for purposes of the Committee.

HB1475/SB427. Establishes a \$50 monthly personal needs allowance for residents of certain care homes.

SB1916 FAMILY CAREGIVERS; OMNIBUS PACKAGE Strengthens support of family caregivers by, extending the joint legislative committee on family caregiving; requiring the executive office on aging to conduct a comprehensive assessment of care recipients' needs and the needs of their family caregivers; and appropriating funds to expand services for care recipients and their family caregivers.

HB325 RELATING TO DENTAL CARE. Expands coverage and funds under the State's Medicaid and QUEST programs to include comprehensive dental care for adults to provide the additional coverage. Appropriates funds for hospital dentistry for the developmentally disabled in the County of Hawaii.

HB1337 RELATING TO THE DEATH CARE INDUSTRY. Provides additional protections for consumers of cemetery or funeral services.

SB12 RELATING TO HEALTH INSURANCE RATE REGULATION. Prohibits health insurance rates that are excessive, inadequate or unfairly discriminatory. Requires health care insurers to submit rate filings for approval by the insurance commissioner. Establishes penalties and appeal procedures.

HB357/SB1191 RELATING TO TRAFFIC SAFETY. Pilot project to test crosswalk safety and programs in the city and county of Honolulu. **HB351** Cameras at dangerous intersections for red light runners.

HB56 RELATING TO HEALTH. Universal Health Care Establishes the Hawaii Health Commission to develop a health plan to provide healthcare coverage for all individuals in the state. Effective July 1, 2020.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Family Caregiving Training Series, Free for family caregivers, Central Union Church, Register 988-6300
March 17, Perspective on Aging ... What's Normal, March 31, Safety & Mobility
April 14, Key Decisions for providing care in the home & person care of an older person.

Media Justice Conference. Saturday, March 17, 9 am –4pm. Kapiolani Community College.

Register: 845-4800. 20 years ago 50 companies owned most of the media, today only 5.

13th ANNUAL PRIMETIME WELLNESS FAIR, Thursday, March 29, 8:30am to 1:00pm, Neal Blaisdell Exhibition Hall. For those 50+ FREE

The 2007 Family Caregiver Day at the Capitol Rotunda is scheduled on Wednesday, March 21, 2007.9- 1pm.

Kupuna Caucus, March 21, 1:30 Room 312.



20 South Vineyard Blvd.
 Honolulu HI 96813
 www.kokuacouncil.org

Hawaii's Voice for a Better Future

Who Are We?

The **Kokua Council** is one of Hawaii's oldest advocacy groups. There is a \$5 annual membership to defray 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 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. "

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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