



WORKING TOGETHER TO HELP OTHERS

**Please join us for lunch
MONDAY, March 24, 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: Various Subway Sandwiches, Salad, Dessert by Eloise" \$5.00 Donation

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

12:00 Program: "Will Medicaid Pay for My Long-Term Care?" Paul Higa is the acting Medical Assistance Program Officer for the Med-QUEST Division of the Department of Human Services since 1982. Mr. Higa's staff is responsible for amending the Medicaid and SCHIP State Plans, the Hawaii Administrative Rules, and providing technical support, policy clarifications and information related to medical assistance issues. Mr. Higa has been a consultant with the Sage Plus Program of the Executive Office on Aging since 1994.

1:00 Adjourn

Lunch Host: Norita Nelson

Board meeting: 1 0:00am Preceding Lunch.

Rebate Checks Begin in May

The President signed a multibillion-dollar economic package that means \$300 to \$1,200 rebates for many American households. Rebates are set to go out beginning in May, and will include seniors living on Social Security. Most taxpayers will receive a check of up to \$600 for individuals and \$1,200 for couples. Seniors earning at least \$3,000 and who owe little or no taxes would get \$300 for singles, \$600 for couples. Those making more than \$75,000 and couples with income over \$150,000 will get smaller

checks. Rebates to seniors and disabled vets were scaled down from \$500 under the original Senate package after the president personally lobbied against including them. Seniors need to file a 2007 federal tax return, either the IRS Form 1040 or the 1040A-short-form, to receive their stimulus checks. This is true even if their income had been low enough that they were not required to file in previous years

Did You Know...According to the Associated Press, by 2040, it is anticipated that about 40% of voters will be 65 or older

NOTES FROM FEBRUARY LUNCH MEETING

Marilyn Seely; The Leahi master plan envisions a long-term care system that would allow Leahi to expand into the community and become a center of excellence for long-term care (LTC). Leahi hospital on 6.7 acres and adjacent to 10 acres of state property, is ideally situated next to Kapiolani community college with its family caregiving training program and to mental health facilities. The last structure at Leahi was built in 1950. The governor has just released funds for the repair of Leahi's physical plant.

There are 9 beds at Leahi still set aside for acute tuberculosis cases. Only 2 of those beds are currently occupied. Creative possibilities include the Eden Alternative, The Greenhouse Project and a think tank to meet the needs of the elderly.

SB 3237 is considered a creative holistic approach and could be a prototype for LTC services in Hawaii. If passed, an interim report would be due 12/2009 and the master plan would be due in 12/2010.

Leigh –Wai Doo then reported that this might be “the most important project that Kokua Council might ever do.” He said it could be a catalyst that will affect the next 3 generations of seniors. It is imperative that it be implemented as soon as possible.

However, the Leahi bill died for this session. We hope the Leahi group will pursue private foundation funding to pursue this worthwhile project .Ed.

Renee Ing distributed information about a cheaper, quieter alternative to the steel on steel rail system chosen by Honolulu officials. The Phileas magnet rail system runs on rubber tires.

www.apts-phileas.com

Tony Lenzer distributed post cards to be mailed to legislators objecting to a bill allowing corporations to increase contributions to campaign funds.

UPDATE ON LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES-2008

Bills alive and crossing over to other house

SB 2204 Removes cap on Corporate Contributions to campaigns. Oppose, See below HB2455

SB 3255 Establishes Long Term Care Commission to explore options for financing long term care.

SB 2830, HB 2196 Omnibus bills for family caregiving. Increases funds to Kupuna Care to provide respite, tax credits for caregivers and home modification ,aging in place, develop cash & counseling model.

SB2047 This home modification tax credit bill establishes an income tax credit for taxpayers who make modifications to their home to increase accessibility for individuals with disabilities or special needs.

SB 2150 Expands Adult Protective Services.

SB 2831 Appropriates funds for U.H. Center on Aging.

SB 2151 Provides neighbors islands with a LTC ombudsman.

HB 7 I-Save Rx Prescription Drug permits Hawaii joining other states to negotiate lower prices.

HB 2198 Establishes a task force to focus on needs of Grandparents raising grandchildren.

HB1993 Universal Health Care appropriates funds to cover uninsured residents.

SCR 25 Convenes task force to study feasibility of establishing a Department of Aging.

DEAD

SB 3237 The Leahi Project

HB 2836 Changing appeal process for denial of benefit by Health Insurers. **A success** since we opposed this bill.

HB 2112, SB 2152 Establishing a Department of Aging **but has become a Resolution SCR 25**

HB 2455 Removes cap on Corporate contributions. **But still alive in Senate. We oppose this.**

SB 2599 Funeral trust Reform

NEWS FROM ELDERLY AFFAIRS DIVISION – HONOLULU COUNTY

The new Senior Helpline phone number is 768-7700. Staff can provide relevant and accurate information and referrals to appropriate programs based on an assessment of your needs. Calls will be kept confidential and can be anonymous.

The 2007-2009 Senior information & Assistance Handbooks are available free at all American Savings branches, any Satellite City Hall.

REBUILDING A CITIZENS' LOBBY IN HAWAII

A group of local citizens is rebuilding a Hawaii chapter of Common Cause. Common Cause is a nonpartisan, nonprofit advocacy organization founded in 1970 as a vehicle for citizens to make their voices heard in the political process and to hold their elected leaders accountable to the public interest.

The mission of Common Cause is to strengthen public participation and faith in our institutions of self-government; to ensure that government and political processes serve the

general interest, rather than special interests; to curb the excessive influence of money on government decisions and elections; to promote fair elections and high ethical standards for government officials; and to protect the civil rights and civil liberties of all Americans.

Learn more about the organization and issues at <http://www.commoncause.org>
Check back for more updates, and contact to get involved. Contact: Nikki Love
info@commoncausehawaii.org

Prescription Drug Group Spends \$22 Million Lobbying Washington in 2007

The pharmaceutical industry's main trade group spent over \$22 million on Washington lobbyists in 2007, the Associated Press reported. This is a 25 percent increase over 2006. Also, the Wall Street Journal reported that prescription prices rose eight percent in 2007, twice the rate of inflation. Some industry analysts, the Journal noted, believe that the increases were aimed to drive drug prices higher before any possible Medicare reforms could be enacted by Congress.

LETTER TO EDITOR: WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO THE RX REBATES? *Bruce McCullough*

It has been over seven months since the Legislature passed Act 60 which required the Department of Human Services (DHS) to negotiate with pharmaceutical companies to lower the cost of prescription drugs for residents who have no drug insurance.

The language of the law is clear and unambiguous. It states: "... the administrator shall use the administrator's best efforts to obtain a rebate amount equal to or greater than the amount of any discount, rebate, or price reduction for prescription drugs provided to the federal government." In other words, DHS is required to seek rebates from drug companies so that the state can pass on those savings to residents.

Unfortunately, DHS Director Lillian Koller has done little to implement the law. Indeed, the Hawaii Rx Plus program has saved an average of a mere 9 cents a claim for secondary rebates, a far cry from the legislative intent.

Why are Director Koller and Governor Lingle failing to pursue rebates from the drug companies?
More importantly, why do they continue to ignore the law?

ANNOUNCEMENTS

KHON TV2 Elderhood Project. Every Thursday morning news.

KGMB TV9 Genius of Aging. Monday mornings 7-8 am.

**THURSDAY, MARCH 20, 14TH ANNUAL Wellness Fair FREE ADMISSION For Ages 50+
8:00 am – 1:00 pm • Neal Blaisdell Exhibition Hall, FREE HEALTH SCREENINGS**

- **Fraud Prevention Seminar**
- **Free Document Shredding by Shredex (drop off at Ward Ave., up to 2 bankers boxes per person)**
- **Kupuna ID**
- **Complimentary Notary Services by Mobile Notary (max 1 document per person, must show current photo ID)**

APRIL 10,17,24, Thursdays, 6:30-8:30pm, FAMILY CAREGIVER SKILLS: Personal Care and Transfer Techniques. Kapiolani Community College, \$15, Room 241-242 Kopiko Bldg. Pre-registration required. Course No. 081HSFCG1. Call 734-9211.



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. "

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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