

# KOKUA



# COUNCIL

WORKING TOGETHER TO HELP OTHERS

**Please Join Us for Lunch!**

**November 28, 2005**

**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 – Chili, Salad, Drinks, Dessert by Eloise \$5.00 donation

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

11: 50 **Program: Pamela Cunningham, Director of SagePlus, Executive Office on Aging, Finding your Way Through the Medicare Maze**

12:45 Announcements

1:00 Adjourn

Lunch Host: Diane Stowell

## **BOARD MEETING: 10:00 A.M. PRECEDING LUNCH**

### **Activism At All Ages** *President's Letter, Larry Geller*

A young social activist is full of fervor--ready to leap into the firestorm of protest to settle the injustices left in the world. The young activist is idealistic and believes, against or perhaps in disregard of the evidence, that simply through enough protest, the world can soon be set straight. We desperately need the energy of youth to bring about real change in the world.

In time, a vision develops, embracing more of reality and channeling youthful expression into creative action. Goals become more long term; the activist becomes a facilitator of change. In mid-life, the activist begins to listen as well as talk. We desperately need the creativity of the midyears to make sure change happens in positive ways.

As an elder, the social activist is able to embrace all sides, understand a broader reality, and bring about change through relationship and communication. The fire of youth is not extinguished, it is merely used in different and usually more effective ways. It is integrated with wisdom developed through time and experience. There is no substitute for having experienced the issues yourself, for having had your own feet in the fire. There is great value in mixing passion with compassion. We desperately need the wisdom and guidance of our elders if change is to have lasting value.

At any age, if we live with awareness, we have access to the fire of youth, the creativity of midyears, and the wisdom of eldership. The key is awareness and developing the skills necessary to be an effective advocate. One can be an elder at any age, nor need age quell the fire of youth.

Why be an advocate when it is socially acceptable to stay home and just watch TV? If you have to ask that question, it's ok, just remember that you also have to answer it yourself.

# Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

One of the most important bills to pass the 2005 legislative session was SB 40, SD1, HD1, which was signed into law as Act 208. Many grandparents are not aware of the new law.

Why is this bill so important? Because it ensures that health care will be available and accessible for children under the care of caregivers, who are, very often, grandparents.

As we all know, due to a lot of different reasons and complicated lives, it is often the grandparents who end up taking care of the keiki. In the past, it was sometimes very difficult for grandparents or other caregivers to get medical or dental care for these children because they were not the parents or the legal guardians. As a result, children went without vital healthcare in their formative years, and this affected the quality of their health into adulthood. In addition, these children lacked the experience of preventative and regular checkups, so they often waited until an emergency to see a doctor.

Thanks to Act 208, caregivers can now authorize healthcare services for the children as long as they have what is called, "an affidavit of caregiver consent."

First, let's make sure we understand the notion of "caregiver". The definition of caregiver in Act 208 is that they must be:

- At least 18 years of age
- They must be related to the child by blood, marriage or adoption
- They must have resided with the minor for at least 6 months.

The affidavit must be notarized and include the following information:

- The caregiver's name and current home address
- The caregiver's birth date
- The caregiver's driver's license number or state identification card number
- The relationship of the caregiver to the minor
- The minor's name
- The minor's birth date
- The length of time the minor has resided with the caregiver
- The caregiver's signature under oath
- If possible, the signature of the minor's parent or legal guardian consenting to the caregiver's authority over the minor's healthcare
- A statement that this does not affect the rights of the parents or legal guardian on matters other than healthcare, that this does not give the caregiver legal custody of the minor, that the parent or legal guardian can rescind the affidavit by providing written notice to healthcare professionals.
- Finally, any person who relies in good faith on the affidavit of caregiver consent is under no obligation to make any further inquiries or investigation on the information provided, and will not be subject to any civil or criminal liability or any professional disciplinary action because of their reliance.

This bill passed unanimously in the House and Senate, signaling the Legislature's support for the important responsibilities that you shoulder as caregivers and grandparents. It is also a major accomplishment in making sure that Hawaii's children receive the healthcare they need and deserve.

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## Notes From October Meeting: Community Issues Forum for the Silver Legislature

Representative Brian Schatz on "Best Ways to Convince Your Legislators".

- Make an appointment to visit with them before the session begins.
- Develop a personal relationship.
- Be cordial, not angry, confrontational or threatening.
- Know your facts, program. If you don't know the answer to a question, say so. Don't lie or exaggerate. Tell them you will get back to them with the answer.
- The Legislator's remarks should not leave the office, although yours may.
- Touch bases with them throughout the session.
- Be nice to the staff. Bring cookies.

*Letter to Editor: Al Hamai*

**Question 1 - - Where do seniors (beneficiaries) go to get information and help with the new Medicare program?**

**Question 2 - - How many plans are being offered in your state?**

For Hawaii, seniors may call the SAGE Plus office, which is a part of the Hawaii State Executive Office on Aging (EOA). The local number for those in the City and County of Honolulu is 586-7299. For neighbor island seniors, they may call the same office at the following toll free number: (888) 875-9229. SAGE Plus is associated with SHIP--State Assisted Health Insurance Assistance Program--and is staffed by volunteers. They can respond to questions on: Medicare, Medicaid, Supplemental Insurance, etc.

According to Adele Ching of the SAGE office, there are around 13 health care providers, who are now offering about 40 different Medicare Part D plans. Also there are about twelve (12) drug companies that are offering about thirty (30) different Part D plans. Makes for a hell of a reading and study for seniors, like my Mom, age 93, and my Mother in Law, age 90, and for me too. What a waste of resources, just to give the medical providers and drug companies opportunities to profiteer on the seniors who need their prescription drugs to survive. We should get our federal government to negotiate with all the drug companies, like they do in other countries, and get one price for each drug, offered to all citizens, not just seniors. That will reduce the cost of prescription drugs, so quickly, and result in savings for all, except the profiteers. Let the Canadians and the Mexicans and others come to the U.S. to purchase their drugs, since with our tremendous national purchasing power we should be able to negotiate the lowest drug prices.

New Board Member: Betty Sugarman has volunteered to become secretary of the Board of Directors starting January 2006. Thank you and welcome! Betty recently returned from a 3-month stint in Japan teaching English to preschoolers. She is pictured in a recent article in the Star-Bulletin describing the experience.

At the Annual Meeting of Sigma Phi Omega in June, the National Gerontology Honor Society, Chapter members re-elected Tony Lenzer, as its President. Tony is Kokua Council's Vice-president.

## **Ways to Avoid Avian Bird Flue**

### **COVER YOUR COUGH AND SNEEZE**

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue.
- Put your tissue in the trash can.
- If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.

### **WASH YOUR HANDS**

- Wash hands with warm, soapy water for at least 10-15 seconds OR use a hand sanitizer after:
  - Coughing or sneezing.
  - Using the bathroom.
  - Caring for a sick person.
  - Handling garbage or animal waste.

### **KEEP LIVING AND WORK AREAS CLEAN**

- Clean areas with household detergents (dishwashing liquid, laundry detergent, hand soap).
- Sanitize surfaces with bleach or alcohol.

### **KEEP YOUR DISTANCE**

- Avoid crowds.
- Limit your travel, if possible.
- Travel to and from work during off-peak hours, if possible.
- Work from home, if possible.

*If you think you're too small to make a difference, you haven't been in bed with a mosquito.*

Kokua Council for Senior Citizens of Hawaii  
Education Fund, Inc.  
20 South Vineyard Blvd.  
Honolulu, HI 96813

### 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 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