

WORKING TOGETHER TO HELP OTHERS

PLEASE JOIN US FOR LUNCH

Monday, January 25, 2015 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Miyama Main Hall, Harris United Methodist Church

Nuuanu Ave. and S. Vineyard Blvd.—Ample parking—driveway off Nuuanu Ave

Agenda:

11:30 Luncheon (optional): Various Pizzas, Salad, and Dessert—\$5.00 Donation

11:50 Welcome, Introductions and Remarks, Election of Board members and officers

12:00 Program: Judy Mohr Peterson, Ph.D.: "Updates on the MedQUEST Program"

Dr. Mohr Peterson served as Oregon's State Medicaid Director from 2009 and in that role was an architect of Oregon's successful health system transformation and coverage expansion. She has been Hawaii's Med-Quest Division Administrator since July, 2015 and brings with her 18 years of public health care experience. Dr. Mohr Peterson currently sits on the board of the National Association of Medicaid Directors and serves as an advisor to the National Organization for State and Local Officials. She also is a contributor to multiple organizations focused on health care delivery system and payment reform. In 2010, Mohr Peterson was named one of six Medicaid Director Fellows in the Robert Wood Johnson's Medicaid Leadership Institute.

1:00 Adjourn

TIME TO PAY YOUR 2016 KOKUA COUNCIL DUES. Look at your address label to see last payment date.

-- Special membership premium -- New members may request a free copy of the DVD "The Graying of Hawaii" by checking the box on the membership form. This 60 min. documentary was produced by Marc Delorme and Audrey Kubota and was featured in a two-hour special on PBS Hawaii on June, 2009. Get yours while copies last.

Kokua Council formulates its 2016 priorities

Each October Kokua Council holds its Community Forum to begin the process of formulating its priorities for the coming legislative session. This time through, attendees listed concerns that apply not only to the state but to the counties.

Topping the list was homelessness, including the plight of homeless seniors. Also on the list were affordable housing, public funding of elections, Kupuna Care, long-term care, mental health, and many, many issues that were mentioned by one or more individuals.

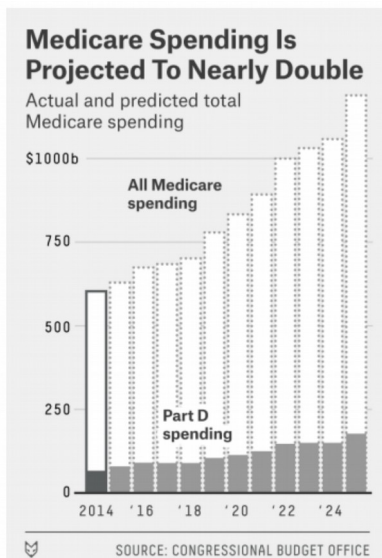
Homelessness is indeed a crisis but at the same time it is just the tip of an iceberg. Underneath is a decades-long crisis in truly affordable housing that shows no signs of abating, exacerbated by Hawaii's chronically low wages—after all, even low rent has to be paid. This year's count is likely to show that homelessness is on the increase, because nothing is yet in place on a sufficient scale to stem the tide.

Kokua Council will continue to work with other organizations on funding long-term care, the "Care Act" which would require hospitals to offer instructions to caregivers upon discharge (doesn't it make sense that they should do that?) and other issues we have in common.

During the past year we have worked hard to get the Department of Health to follow the law and post care home inspection reports. This has begun to bear fruit, but the work is not over. Only recently has DOH begun posting reports for the types of care homes known as ARCHs and E-ARCHs (please Google Expanded Adult Residential Care Home for an explanation). The selection of one of these two types is critical to families having to make difficult and often lifetime decisions at the time of hospital discharge, for example. Look for a more complete report possibly next month.

Medicare costs rising, may spur Congress to impose cuts

There doesn't seem to be any question that costs for Medicare will rise substantially over the coming years. The chart at left is from a tweet by FiveThirtyEight that illustrates the issue.



What we can expect in reaction will be some kind of move against



Medicare by the Republican-controlled Congress. One favored "solution" is Medicare vouchers. Why are they bad? Another tweet illustrates the problem.

It's clear that advocacy on a national level will be needed to preserve and improve Medicare.

How to follow the 2016 Hawaii State Legislature

The 2016 session of the Hawaii State Legislature will be underway as you read this newsletter. For those who are interested in following particular measures or who want to advocate for a particular bill, learning how the Legislature operates and how to be effective can be a challenge—and then participation in the process can be time consuming.

For those on Neighbor Islands or living in rural areas of Oahu, physical attendance at hearings is likely impossible.

The best place to start learning about the "lege" is the Legislative Reference Bureau (LRB) Public Access Room page at lrbhawaii.org/par/. Yes, you will need to use a computer. It may be possible to have the office of one of your elected representatives put you on a mailing list for a particular measure instead, but that may not work well. You can always drop by the LRB in Room 401 at the State Capitol to get advice and use one of the computers they make available to the public. A volunteer may even help you to write and submit testimony. Take advantage of the help if you are uncertain. The LRB has posted several videos which explain the legislative process, and on another web page there are reference manuals available for downloading. What follows are some hints to make participation a bit easier.

Get on the mailing list for hearing notices

Unfortunately there is no easy way to receive an email when a particular bill is scheduled for a hearing. The best that can be done, until the Capitol website provides such a service, is to get on the mailing list for hearing notices (at www.Capitol.Hawaii.gov). Then submit testimony via the Capitol web page.

Consider following sessions on TV

Showing up in person at a hearing can often cost a day's work, lots of quarters in the parking meter, and of course is impossible for anyone living far away from the Capitol. Many sessions are televised live on capitoltv.org—check the hearing notice or call the staff at the committee chair's office to see if you can save a trek to the Capitol. Sometime later this session a new video on demand service should begin called HSPAN, as reported by Civil Beat in a [January 13 article](#).



Make your written testimony as effective as possible

Unfortunately, many legislators may not read much written testimony. In the past, before computers became available to legislators, one senator (who shall remain nameless) told me he never reads written testimony. This is why it is still important to show up in person to give or summarize your testimony orally. Still, there are a few things that can help your testimony be read and understood.

1. State at the very top in boldface whether you support or oppose the measure.
2. Use large print. 10- or 11-point type is tiny on the small laptop screen. Go for 14-point and use boldface where it will help provide emphasis.
3. Put your conclusions up at the top, and then give your reasoning later. We're taught in school to do it the other way around, but most likely a legislator will only read what's at the top of the first page.
4. Submit your testimony as early as possible, otherwise legislators' eyes may get tired before they get to yours in the heap. It may be more important to be early than to perfect the wording.
5. Don't be afraid to use graphs or illustrations. They attract the eye and can effectively make your point.



Kokua Council for Senior Citizens of Hawaii Education Fund, Inc.
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<http://www.kokuacouncil.org>

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Monday Jan. 21 Program: “Updates on the MedQUEST Program” with Dr, Judy Mohr Peterson, Kokua Council Windward, Thursday, Feb. 11: “Becoming a Blue Zones Community” with Erika Kobayashi

Who Are We?

Kokua Council is one of Hawaii’s oldest advocacy groups. There is a **\$10.00 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. There is ample parking. A light lunch is provided for a \$5 donation. **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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Website: www.kokuacouncil.org Newsletter editor: Larry Geller

✂ **JOIN KOKUA COUNCIL!** **New member premium – check to receive free DVD (see p. 1)**

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 Member __ \$10.00 Life Member __ \$100.00 Organizational Member __ \$25.00

Donations: 501(c)(4) Advocacy _____ Education Fund: 501(c)(3) _____ (Tax Deductible)

Date _____

Name _____ Phone _____ Fax _____ Email _____

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