



WORKING TOGETHER TO HELP OTHERS

PLEASE JOIN US FOR LUNCH

**Monday, September 26, 2016** Miyama Main Hall, Harris United Methodist Church

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

11:55 **Welcome, Introductions and Remarks**

12:00 **Program: Jerry Coffee LCSW: “Homeless Overview and Update”**

**Jerry Coffee** serves as the Clinical Director for the Institute of Human Services (IHS), Hawaii's largest and most established homeless provider. As Clinical Director Jerry works to support IHS's day-to-day operations, which involves oversight for mental health, medical and outreach services and housing placement and employment training programs. IHS provides shelter to over 300 single men, woman and families each night, serves over 700 meals per day and is managed by over 100 employees.

1:00 **Adjourn**

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**Kokua Council Windward: Thursday, September 8, 2016: “Advocating for the Well Being of Our Seniors” COMMUNITY WELCOME**

Pohai Nani, Club Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 45-090 Namoku Street, Kaneohe

**11:30 (Optional) — Buffet Lunch in Dining Room, \$11.** Reservation and Information: Samuel Cox (808) 779-3606 or [revsamuelcox@gmail.com](mailto:revsamuelcox@gmail.com).

**12:30 Program: John McDermott LSW, ACSW, M.Div, Long Term Care Ombudsman, Executive Office on Aging: “Advocating for the Well Being of Our Seniors”**

**John McDermott**, Hawaii’s Long Term Care Ombudsman, looks out for the rights and well-being of our pensioners.

From the website: “The Long-Term Care Ombudsman (LTCO) program was established by federal and state statutes. The LTCO identifies, investigates, and resolves complaints that are made by, or on behalf of residents, and related to action, inaction, or decisions that may adversely affect the health, safety, welfare, and rights of residents of long term care facilities such as nursing homes, adult residential care homes, assisted living facilities, and other long-term care facilities.”

John will give us an update on the current challenges facing senior citizens in Hawaii.

**1:30 Adjourn**

# Restrictive formularies and high prescription drug costs are bankrupting seniors in increasing numbers

It's time for senior groups to become more active in opposing price gouging in the pharmaceutical industry.

In reaction to creeping prescription drug price increases imposed by insurers, Kokua Council posted its [Position Against Restrictive Formularies](#) on its website in 2005. Since then, cost increases have accelerated at an alarming rate. Insurers are leaving the bulk of the expense to be borne by patients. Only occasionally do news media highlight the impact these costs have on those who depend on lifesaving drugs that have become unaffordable for only one reason: corporate greed.

*“Kokua Council opposes cost containment strategies that restrict access to needed medications or other services. The Council believes that doctors and informed patients should be unhindered in making medication decisions based on doctor and patient experience, side-effect profile, and treatment guidelines.”*

But the root of the problem is Big Pharma price gouging. Two recent examples recently in the news were a 5,000% increase in the price of a drug used by cancer and AIDS patients by Turing Pharmaceuticals in September and a currently raging controversy over the ever-escalating cost of the EpiPen, a life-saving self-injector used primarily by those with allergic reactions. From an 8/30/2016 [Democracy Now](#) program:

*In 2007, the wholesale price of the life-saving drug in the U.S. was \$57. Less than a decade later, it now costs over \$300. Each EpiPen reportedly contains only \$1 worth of medicine. Mylan has a near monopoly in the U.S., and the company has seen its profits from the EpiPen alone skyrocket to \$1 billion a year. ... Meanwhile, Mylan CEO Heather Bresch's total compensation has spiked from around \$2.5 million in 2007 to almost \$19 million today.*

The program notes that the EpiPen technology is 40 years old and the research was largely paid for by the government—that is, by taxpayers.

Parents buy a two-pen pack which expires annually and also must provide a pack for their child's school, at a total cost of over \$1,200. Insurance plans increasingly refuse to cover the cost. Seniors also find that the cost of this necessary medication can exceed their Social Security benefits for a month.

Despite the impact on seniors, it was the parents who organized protests outside of Mylan on 8/30. A petition of 700,000 signatures was delivered to the company by Public Citizen. Moveon.org had also gathered more than 200,000 signatures on their own petition.

Seniors on fixed incomes in particular find they have no way to cover the cost of medication if they receive a cancer diagnosis. From an October 2014 episode of [60 minutes](#):

*Dr. Leonard Saltz: We're in a situation where a cancer diagnosis is one of the leading causes of personal bankruptcy. ... They're priced at well over \$100,000 a year.*

These are but two examples of the widespread challenge of prescription drug price increases. Seniors marched on Washington in the '60s, it's time that senior advocacy groups raised their voices on pharmaceutical prices and medical insurance issues.



# Honolulu thoughtless about senior needs

Honolulu’s “[Complete Streets White Paper](#)” seems admirable in its objectives. The trouble is, the City’s execution of these objectives leaves a lot to be desired.

Crossing signals still do not leave time for slower walkers to safely cross. As to sidewalks, the White Paper states:

*Nowhere is the concept of universal access more important than in the design of sidewalks.*

Yet rights-of-way, particularly for those using wheelchairs, have been severely restricted, in violation of “complete streets” requirements, in several locations. As examples here are three snapshots of sidewalk rights-of-way that have been narrowed:



(Left: Ala Moana Boulevard.; Above: Thomas Square)

The Star-Advertiser reported that seniors have trouble using the “toadstools” that the City has installed as seating at many bus stops. Indeed, seniors, those with disabilities and others with, um, large bottoms, can no longer sit while waiting, making it impossible for many to use the bus. And this is important: the “toadstools” are **not in compliance with ADA specifications** for bus stop seating.



Here is another area where seniors could advocate for their rights.

## Please donate – help support Kokua Council’s lawsuit

To get the Department of Health to post care home inspection reports as the law requires will involve convincing a judge that they must do that. The lawsuit has been filed. We have legal expenses ahead. **Please contribute to our legal fund to help us win for Hawaii seniors and others needing long term care.**

We’re counting on your help to succeed with this challenge. **Please don’t delay**—send in your contribution as soon as possible.

I want to contribute to Kokua Council’s Legal Fund. Please make checks payable to **Kokua Council** and mark them “Legal Fund” at the bottom. Please consult your tax adviser as to applicable tax deductions.

\$10.00     \$25.00     \$100.00     \$250.00     Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

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



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

Non Profit Org.  
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WORKING TOGETHER TO HELP OTHERS

**September 8 Kokua Council Windward: “Advocating for the Well Being of Our Seniors”**  
**September 26 General Meeting: “Homeless Overview and Update”**  
 (details on both meetings inside)

**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. “

**Board Members**

President Marc Delorme	Secretary Helen Wagner, 247-7962, helennjeff@hawaii.rr.com
Treasurer /Advocacy Barbara Service, barbarajservice@gmail.com	Treasurer, Education Fund, T.J. Davies, tjdavies@juno.com
Charles Carole, Samuel Cox, Marilyn Seely, Jim Shon, Larry Geller	Newsletter editor: Larry Geller

**Website:** [www.kokuacouncil.org](http://www.kokuacouncil.org)



**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 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 \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Treasurer, Kokua Council, Harris United Methodist Church, 20 S. Vineyard Blvd., Honolulu, HI 9681