



WORKING TOGETHER TO HELP OTHERS

JOIN US FOR LUNCH!

Monday, July 24, 2006

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: Pasta, eggplant parmesan, salad, drinks. Dessert by Eloise. \$5.00 donation

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

12:00 Program: Candidate Forum: (D)Bev Harbin, (D)Karl Rhoads and (R)Collin Wong from District 28, Downtown Honolulu

12:45 Announcements

1:00 Adjourn

Luncheon Host: John Cannell

BOARD MEETING: 10:00 a.m. Preceding Lunch

Notes from June Meeting—Prepaid Funeral Trusts, Sarah Robinson

The bottom line: The Funeral Consumers Alliance Hawaii and AARP both oppose prepaying for funerals. They suggest a better way is to set up a “pay on death” account at any bank, savings and loan, credit union or other financial institution. This type of account will accrue interest and does not count as an asset if you need Medicaid. You have control over the funds, there are no administrative or cancellation fees, and any remaining funds after expenses go to the beneficiary of the account, not to the mortuary.

Some problems with the plans: services and products contracted at time of purchase may not be available at time of need and higher priced items such as caskets and urns are often the only products

available. If you cancel for any reason, the plan keeps 30% even if no services were provided. Often the cancellation fee is not mentioned at time of purchase.

If you already own a prepaid plan make sure your survivors have a copy. Is the contract marked “paid in full?” If not, attach a copy of the receipt for final payment to the contract.

A mortuary price survey was circulated as well as their current newsletter. For more information the Funeral Consumers Alliance can be reached at 638-5580 or PO Box 11949, Honolulu, 96828. They also offer free workshops on how to write a statement of desires, what’s legal and ethical in Hawaii and more.

President's Letter, *Larry Geller*

Kokua Council members are very busy during the legislative session. It's like a full-time job, but no pay. There is testimony to write and seemingly endless meetings with lawmakers and other advocacy groups. At the end of the session, usually several good bills survive the process, so it is all worth it.

There is no rest for the weary advocate. This past year, lobbyists, corporations and other special interests showed up as usual, with checkbooks in hand. Money still talks—for example, as a result of corporate pressure on legislators, we lost health insurance rate regulation this session, and everyone will pay more in the end.

At least there is a sense of empowerment on the local scene. If we work hard, we can achieve much. If we failed, it's because we didn't work hard enough.

Nationally, there has been one attack after another on the health care safety net. One day an action alert comes in on the Deficit Reduction Act that will cause millions of Americans to lose access to critical health care services they now receive through Medicaid. Next, it's "Congress Going After

Medicaid & Medicare--Again!" because a bill that poses serious threats to Medicaid, Medicare, and SCHIP funding is going through Congress. We're supposed to stop it. How?

Advocacy does work. A new law which would have required, starting July 1st that the 50 million U.S. citizens currently enrolled in Medicaid must provide documentation of their citizenship status and their identity has just been partially stopped due to relentless pressure of advocates on our congress people.

It's one thing after another. Kokua Council can't protest all of it. We need your help. How? Three ways: (1) join or renew your membership, only \$5 but it keeps us going, (2) let us know if you'd be willing to write or call legislators or congress people, and (3) vote wisely this November, so that our government will stop doing things like this and begin to support the people instead of special interests with big bucks. Oh yes, there is one thing more: (4) please support clean elections so that money can be taken out of politics.

The Eden Alternative/The Green House Project, *Laura Manis*

Imagine a long term care facility for people requiring the highest level of nursing care, with no long corridors, no nursing stations, no administrative offices, where the residents sleep as long as they want, decide when they want to eat, have the same staff every day who do almost all the care.

Dr. William Thomas, M.D. and Mary Jane Koren, a senior program officer at the Commonwealth Fund, a foundation that makes health-related grants, described the concept to an invited group of health care providers and advocates last month at Kahala Nui Assisted Living.

As a medical director at an upstate New York nursing home in the early '90's; Thomas moved dogs, cats, birds, and plants into the facility and radically shifted the focus from delivering scheduled institutional care to providing for the dignity and emotional well-being of the residents. Called the Eden Alternative, the project was a success and allowed Thomas to create a nonprofit that now lists 300 Eden Home conversions in America and an additional 200 overseas. According to a study by the New York State Health Department, after Eden, the home experienced a 50 percent decrease in infection, 71 percent dip in daily drug costs for each resident, and a 26 percent drop in nurse's aide turnover.

Thomas is now on to his next big thing: the Green House Project. The first Green Houses were constructed in Tupelo, Mississippi in 2003.

Since an intensive evaluation has documented their success, Thomas has teamed up with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to replace more than 100 nursing homes nationwide with clusters of small, cozy houses, each sheltering eight to 10 residents in private rooms, with private bathrooms arrayed around a "hearth room" with an open kitchen. Seniors would be free to eat at any time they wanted, participate in all house decisions, and generally make themselves at home. Nurse's aides—the caregivers who work most closely with the elders, would have greater authority and would serve many functions, including cooking family-style meals and light housekeeping. In other words, a place like home.

Two more of the projects have now broken ground, and the Green House Project has also received a \$10 million grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation that will allow it to rapidly replicate in all 50 states. Both Baltimore and New York City are planning apartment-style, vertical Green Houses that create the same family atmosphere in the city.

Why can't we have it here?

"Kupuna Connections"

Kapiolani Community College's TV Series dedicated to Hawaii's seniors and their families! Hosted by Cullen Hayashida & David Nakamaejo

New Schedule begins August 23, 2006: Every Wednesday, 4:30 pm to 5:30 pm; Rebroadcast every Sunday, 12 noon to 1 pm on Community Access TV, Channel 55. **Sample of Topics:**

- How Seniors Can be Hi-Tech
- Adult Day Care
- Residential Options for Seniors
- City's Information and Referral Service for Seniors
- Keeping our Brains Healthy
- Update on Retirement and Assisted Living Facilities
- Home Care
- Meals on Wheels Program
- What Are Type II Care Homes?
- Respiratory Do's and Don'ts for Seniors

Call to suggest topics or issues for Kupuna Connections: 734-9469, Email: cullen@hawaii.edu

Kupuna Caucus—June 28 Meeting Notes

Prescription Drugs: Adele Ching of the Sage Plus program reported that 83.7% of eligible Hawaii residents are covered by either Medicare Part D or other Rx insurance.

Elder Abuse: According to the American Bar Association "Hawaii has the most restrictions of any state in adult protective services," announced Attorney Jim Pietsch of the UH Elder Law Program, to a packed hearing room at the State Capitol. Changing essentially three words in Hawai'i law would allow the state to investigate many more cases of suspected elder abuse, thereby broadening an adult-protection statute. Pietsch, recommended that the state's current law be amended to cover "vulnerable" rather than "dependent" adults, change the word "and" to "or" in key parts of the statute, and add an "elderly" component to it.

The broader law will encourage the reporting of suspected abuse cases that currently are going unreported because people believe that the state's Adult Protective Services will not pursue an investigation, Pietsch said.

For the state to currently investigate, the suspected victim must be:

- ✓ Dependent on someone for care because of a physical or mental impairment.
- ✓ A victim of abuse.
- ✓ In imminent danger of continued abuse.

Saying that while Adult Protective Services does a good job within the limits of the law, Pietsch said social workers at three O'ahu hospitals recently told him they no longer bother to report suspected abuse cases, believing that Adult Protective Services would take no action.

In addition to broadening the law to make it apply to "vulnerable" adults 18-74 years of age, Pietsch recommended replacing "and" with "or" in certain sections so an investigation can be triggered if the case meets only one of the two remaining criteria: The alleged victim already has been abused "or" is in imminent danger of further abuse.

He also recommended that, like some other states, Hawai'i specifically add "elderly" to the protected group of people covered by the law. He suggested that any report involving an alleged victim 75 or older be automatically investigated. **The law would then read: "Elder and Vulnerable Adult Protection" Act.**

Other Business: Rep. Cynthia Thielen was appointed to head a committee to draft a mission statement by the next meeting and attendees suggested other issues to be explored in future meetings.

The next meeting of Kupuna Caucus is Friday, July 28 at 11:30 am, State Capitol, Room 225.

Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women Oral History Collection

The Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women will begin the work of establishing the Hawaii Women's Oral History Collection. The goal of the collection is to collect women's stories in their own voices, enabling them to speak to Hawaii's future, sharing their wisdom and knowledge. To begin the process I am asking for interested individuals and organizations to attend the first meeting of the planning committee on **July 27, 2006, 10:00 a.m., Leiopapa A Kamehameha Building, 235 S. Beretania Street, 4th floor conference room, 405, Honolulu, HI 96813. Please R.S.V.P. by contacting Jeannette Powell-Campbell at 586-5757 or by email at Jeannette.E.Powell-Campbell@hawaii.gov.**

Sharon Ferguson-Quick, Executive Director



c/o Harris United Methodist Church
 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 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. “

- Website: www.kokuacouncil.org
- President Larry Geller, 540-1928, lgeller@igc.org Treasurer Ed. Fund T.J. Davies, tjdavies@juno.com
- Vice President Tony Lenzer, 261-2095, tlenzer@hawaii.rr.com Treasurer Advocacy Fund Evelyn Shepard
- Vice President Laura Manis, 597-8838, manis@lava.net General Info Eloise Monsarrat, 839-1545, Remons1@hawaiiantel.net
- Secretary Betty Sugarman, 261-8936, betty333@lava.net
- Newsletter Jeanne Y. Ohta, 373-3186, jyohta@hawaii.rr.com

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	LIFE MEMBER	ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERS	
____\$5.00	____\$100.00	____\$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