



## HAWAII'S VOICE FOR A BETTER FUTURE

### NOTICE DATE CHANGE

**Please join us for lunch**  
**MONDAY, June 25, 2007**

**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: Govinda's Vegetarian Buffet, Salad, Dessert by Eloise. \$5.00 donation

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

**12:00 PROGRAM: Mae Mendelson**, Using her experience from her former work with Hawaii Intergenerational Network and AARP, she will speak about **Integrating Elders in the Community, Locally and Globally**. Integration includes recruiting seniors to do stints teaching English in Japan and planning senior educational study tours in Europe, Asia and Africa.

12:30 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Lunch Host: GRACE FURUKAWA

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING: 10:00 A.M. PRECEEDING LUNCH

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#### **NOTES FROM MAY MEETING – Rep. Josh Green, M.D.**

As a physician, Rep. Green's focus is on statewide health issues: access to care, health insurance and suicide prevention. The bill providing Universal Healthcare Coverage for all of Hawaii's children (HB 1008) is landmark legislation, guaranteeing that Hawaii will become the first state in the nation to provide INSURANCE FOR EVERY CHILD. Applications for care were simplified with many restrictions removed.

Green stated: "Finally, we have begun to make significant strides in improving our healthcare system by truly investing statewide. I fought for and won almost \$80 million in new resources for hospitals, doctors, nurses and advanced medical training over the next two years especially in areas that are under serviced."

He is committed to making sure Hawaii's citizens have access to the care we need. As Health Chair in 2008, Green will continue to be a statewide leader on healthcare issues. He plans to pursue healthcare for everyone in the state with a goal of success by 2010. He expects the Legislature to be besieged by lobbyists fighting against the bill. Many other important matters have also been addressed this year, such as affordable housing, regulating the health insurance industry, medical malpractice reform and investment in public education.

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER *Larry Geller*

All the bad predictions about Medicare Part D are coming true, and the reality is cruel for many seniors. Far from reducing the cost of prescription drugs through competition between the private plans, costs have increased faster than the rate of inflation and faster than seniors' cost of living adjustments. In fact, the median increase is approximately three times faster than COLA, leaving seniors hard-pressed to pay for the medicines they need.

The biggest beneficiaries are the drug companies, of course, whose profits are protected. They threaten the long-term viability of the Medicare system since their huge profits drive up Medicare costs.

When politicians have to deal with the growing Medicare expense, seniors will have few friends. It's critical that everyone affected—seniors and their families—push their Congressional representatives now for relief from this poorly conceived plan with its absurd and damaging “doughnut hole” that places their well-being in jeopardy.

Hawaii families concerned about this issue should write or call our Congressional delegation and ask them to push for sensible control of prescription drug prices and an end to the “doughnut hole.” Recent attempts to put a weak drug negotiation provision into Medicare failed to pass. We need to push them to do better. Sitting over in Washington, can they understand the reality of falling into a “doughnut hole” and having to bear an incredible expense for necessary medicines? Tell them about it. Their phone numbers are in your phone book.

Please also support Kokua Council through your membership and donations. Consider becoming a life member. Ask us how you can join in the fight for better medical care for all of Hawaii's citizens. If you have special skills or areas of expertise, please let us know.

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### U.S. SENATE VOTE ON DRUG IMPORTATION

The results are a mixture of good news and bad news. The good news is that the Senate approved the drug importation amendment by a voice vote. The bad news is that Senators also voted to create an unnecessary roadblock for importation by also adopting an amendment requiring the Secretary of Health and Human Services to certify the safety of drugs before they can be imported. This provision was designed to ensure that the Secretary would be able to block importation.

Health Insurance Coverage For Children and The Budget: In President Bush's FY 2008 budget, funding for Medicaid, which serves one in six Americans, has once again been severely curtailed, and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) has been drastically under-funded. Both of these programs are vital for low-income families in need of health care and are most often utilized by women. For instance, almost 71 percent of the Medicaid beneficiaries over the age of 19 are women.

With respect to SCHIP, which is a program intended to provide health care to low income people who earn too much to qualify for Medicaid, but too little to afford private health insurance, the President's budget cuts parents from coverage under SCHIP, including pregnant women.

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### LETTERS TO EDITOR:

Remarkable! I reviewed the 33 bills listed in the 2007 Aging Issues Booklet and found that 23 or 69.6% were adopted in some measure, e.g. several bills were combined in or added to other bills, and in several cases another bill number was adopted containing the same contents of a listed bill. While there is much more work to be done, we might want to congratulate everyone for a successful legislative session. *Senator Les Ihara, Jr. Co Chair of Kupuna Caucus.*

**John White**, longtime Kokua Council board member, passed away at the end of April. He helped produce and distribute newsletters for many organizations, including Kokua Council. As board member, his views helped shape many of our policies and administrative operations. John was the consummate volunteer, serving for more than 10 years as executive director and later board member of the Memorial Society of Hawaii, transforming it into the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Hawaii, a strong advocacy organization. He also volunteered for the Hemlock Society and for Foster Gardens. We miss him and the example of service that he exemplified through his many selfless contributions

## **MORE ON 2007 LEGISLATION (Governor has until June 25 to notify legislature of vetoes)**

\*HB10 Mandates DHS to negotiate rebates with drug manufactures. **Vetoed** by Governor. VETO WAS OVER RIDDEN BY LEGISLATURE.

\*SB1184 Adult Protective Services changes "dependent" to "vulnerable", allows Adult Protective Services to investigate when adult has been abused OR is threatened with abuse. HELD IN CONFERENCE COMMITTEE. THERE WAS AGREEMENT ON POLICY, BUT THERE WAS NO TIME TO CLARIFY FUNDING. During interim, more research will be done to get more exact figures. The bill is still alive and will go directly to the Conference committee in the 2008 session.

\*HB1337 Improves consumer protection in pre-paid funeral trusts. **But** Hawaii continues to be one of the few states that allow the Funeral Industry to keep 30% of the trust fund even when no services are delivered.

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## **HIGHLIGHTS FROM OTHER MEETINGS**

**April 27. Legislative Committee of Policy Advisory Board for Executive Office on Aging (PABEA)** meeting with Governor Lingle re no appointment of a Director for the Executive Office on Aging vacant since November 2006.

Governor: "Can't find anyone to accept a lower salary than they are now making, salary is capped by law. Need someone to agree with my vision of helping elders stay at home as long as possible."

PABEA member Michael Sumja volunteered to find applicants using his professional experience as a recruiter. Sent a name of qualified person to Governor early in May. No response.

### **June 1. Kupuna Caucus**

Lanakila Meals on Wheels will run out of funds July 1<sup>st</sup> due to delays in the releasing of funds by the Administration and will have to cut fragile elderly who are not able to shop or cook and depend

on Meals on Wheels to continue living in their homes. *See Governor's vision above.*

Na Tutu (Grandparents advocacy Organization) was able to get administrative changes in Public Housing practices permitting resident grandparents who have become responsible for raising their grandchildren, stay in their elderly housing apartments until they can be moved to family housing.

**Question for community discussion:** Should we have a Constitution Convention? The issue, by law will be on the ballot in 2008. The one and only convention was held 1978, 30 years ago. Some say we have a broken social service system, an inadequate delivery of quality health services including long term care, no plan for neighbor island transportation and services, no long range goals for how this state should look in the next 50 years. Let's start thinking and talking about this.

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## **MANY GRANDPARENTS ARE JUMPING ON PLANES TO PROVIDE CHILD CARE**

Countless grandparents are making extraordinary efforts to help their children balance work and home, but *The New York Times* recently profiled a new type of caregiver, the "incredible flying granny nanny." With high day care costs prohibitive for many parents and the cost of airfare often less than a professional facility, some grandmas and grandpas have taken to intercity commuting to care for their grandchildren. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, grandparents cared for 19.4 percent of preschoolers with working mothers in 2002, more often than child care (19 percent), fathers (18.2 percent), or private help (9 percent). This involvement marks a significant jump from 1995 when they ranked third behind fathers and day care centers. The increase is attributed to a generation with the time and financial resources to help, and does not reflect the full range of grandparents going to extremes or offering assistance in other ways.

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## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Public Hearing on State Plan on Aging: June 25, 2007, 9:30 am, Lanakila Multipurpose Senior Center, 1640 Lanakila Ave. Copies are available at Executive Office on Aging, 250 Hotel Street, Room 406 and Honolulu Area Agency on Aging, 715 S. King. Room 200. Written comments on document may be submitted in writing before or during public hearing. Information: 586-0100.



20 South Vineyard Blvd.  
 Honolulu HI 96813  
 www.kokuacouncil.org

Hawaii's Voice for a Better Future

**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. "

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	Evelyn Shepard, 595-4025
Vice President	Laura Manis, 597-8838, manis@lava.net	General Info	Eloise Monsarrat, 839-1545
Secretary	Betty Sugarman, 261-8936, betty333@hawaiiantel.net		
Newsletter	Jeanne Y. Ohta, 373-3186, jyohta@hawaii.rr.com	Website:	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.

<b>INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS</b>	<b>LIFE MEMBER</b>	<b>ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERS</b>	<b>DONATIONS</b>
_____ \$5.00	_____ \$100.00	_____ \$25.00	_____

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