

KOKUA



COUNCIL

WORKING TOGETHER TO HELP OTHERS

PLEASE JOIN US FOR LUNCH

Monday, June 28, 2010

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: Vegetarian Lasagna, Salad, and Dessert**—\$5.00 Donation
11:45 Welcome, Introductions and Remarks, Larry Geller, President

12:00 Program: George W. Greene: CEO of The Healthcare Association of Hawaii (**HAH**): “**What Does HAH Do for Elders?**”

On September 1, 2009, George W. Greene took became head of the Healthcare Association of Hawaii.

Greene began his career as Staff Counsel to Congressman Bob Inglis from 1996 – 1997. He has been Policy Advisor to San Diego Mayor Susan Golding, was Director of Advocacy, Community and Multicultural Affairs for Sharp Healthcare. While with Sharp he secured over \$3 million in grant funding and passage of state legislation educating the California K-12 population about brain injury prevention.

Prior to joining HAH, George was Region 9 Director of the American Hospital Association, working on advocacy and membership relations with hospital executives in Hawaii, California, Washington, Alaska, Oregon, and Nevada.

12:30 Questions and Answers

12:45 Announcements

1:00 Adjourn

Lunch Host: Phyllis Hiramatsu

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

WHAT DOES HEALTHCARE REFORM MEAN TO YOU?

For those over 65

- No Copayments, Deductibles for Medicare Physicals and Preventive Services
- Starting in January 2011, Medicare will end co-payments and deductibles for annual physicals and many preventive services, such as cancer, cardiovascular and diabetes screenings will no longer require any out-of-pocket payments. The number of covered preventive services will be expanded; and for the first time,
- Medicare will cover an annual wellness visit and personalized prevention plan for every beneficiary.

HIGHLIGHTS: POST SESSION FORUM- THE GOOD, BAD AND UGLY

Present: Legislators Lynn Finnegan, Marilyn Lee, President of Senate Colleen Hanabusa, Suzanne Chun Oakland, Jill Tokuda, Roz Baker, Speaker Calvin Say, Norman Sakamoto and 80 attendees representing 30 organizations and the community.

All panelists agreed “Most difficult session in 14 years.” To quote Speaker **Say**, “The accomplishments of the legislators were amazing. It was a major effort dealing with the budget deficit and what was restored for education and human services.... It was one of the best sessions of the past few years in terms of people working together.”

Senator Hanabusa: All 76 legislators were able to come to agreement about their priorities, which were Education and Human Services. Because of this prioritized focus, they were able to move some of the Kupuna Caucus’s agenda

For a gentleman wondering how the Governor can sign a bill and not release the money – that authority is given by state law.

Q: Has a Constitutional Amendment been considered to limit the powers of the Governor?

A: (Speaker Say): yes, but he doesn’t want to tie the hands of a Democratic Governor. (Hanabusa): Even with Gov. Cayatano, she introduced a bill prohibiting the Governor from restricting federal dollars. It didn’t pass.

Q: How can we get a list of money that has been appropriated over the years and not released?

A: Online or through the advocacy groups.

Q: What can we expect next year?

A (Speaker): A) September collective bargaining with state employees; B) The Employees Union Trust Fund is a concern. Are the current retiree’s benefits a priority over current workers? C) Ceded Lands will be an issue. D) Budget – the mandated benefits of state employees. More seniors should run for office and become involved in the political process. Also, long-term care is the concern of the decade.

Senator Tokuda: Top priority was the social safety net and ending furloughs. Funds came from 1.4 billion in shortfall solutions, 4% came from targeted tax increases.

She’s proud of the \$3 million for the public library system, 22.6 million to the weighted student formula (\$113 per student per school), \$4.5 mil for emergency medical services, 2 million for community services, 440 positions restored to human services.

Rep Marilyn Lee : All 51 house members voted yes on the budget. It was amazing that they didn’t take the (Hotel tax)TAT from the counties and that there was no GET Raise. Taking the TAT would have resulted in property tax increases. The number of tax increases and fees only resulted in 5% of the solution. Kupuna Care will save money in the long run.

Sen. Baker: Banner year for the Commerce and Consumer Protection Committee with over 50 bills signed into law (i.e., Public utilities commission consumer advocate funding) 15 await the Governors action.

Rep. Finnegan ®: Voted for the budget and against special tax increases. She wanted additional cuts. Doesn’t like the two-year budget and supplemental budget and the fact that the legislature doesn’t have to share a six-year plan like the Governor. If the Governor did not restrict some of the funds, they wouldn’t have money for six years. By signing or not signing a law rather than veto, the Governor leaves open the opportunity to release the funding when she can.

Senator Baker: People need to raise their issues with candidates running for office.

Suzanne Chun Oakland: Commended Barbara Stanton (AARP) for getting \$500,000 more for Kupuna Care and Stuart Ho for raising the money for the long term care commission. Discussion about grandparents raising grandchildren and the fact that schools still sometimes don’t grant them their rights, the need to raise taxes to fund the growing service needs of seniors and the need for tax reform and tax relief. Senator Baker interjected regarding the need for Economic Development.

ACTION TAKEN: 50 letters urging the Governor to sign SB2469, funding social services including Kupuna Care and then releasing the funds were signed by attendees and delivered to the Governor's office.

SHINING LIGHT AWARDS

HARA/Kokua Council Shining Light awards were presented to Rob Perez, staff reporter for the Honolulu Advertiser for his four part series on *Are We Ready for the Silver Tsunami* published March 28-31, identifying the problems faced by seniors and their families who need long term care and Senator Roz Baker for her long time advocacy of senior issues and her continuing accessibility and advocacy on senior and community issues.

LETTERS TO EDITOR

Congratulations on Post-Session Forum

It was a good meeting. Kudos and mahalo to you, Al, Larry, and everyone else for putting it together. What a nice wrap up for a harrowing session. I attended last year as well and both times, liked the substantive wrap up by the Senate and House leaders and key legislators regarding senior issues especially.

It is a gracious and hospitable way to hold our legislators accountable. *Charlene Young, AARP*

Inhumane Treatment for Mentally Ill

"More Mentally Ill Persons Are in Jails and Prisons Than Hospitals: A Survey of the States," done by the Treatment Advocacy Center, shows that there are now more seriously mentally ill persons in jails and prisons than in hospitals. In Hawaii there are 2.9 mentally ill persons in jails and prisons for every one in a hospital. We believe this is inhumane and evidence of a broken treatment system. Sincerely, E. Fuller Torrey, M.D.

SAFEGUARD NUMBER #4: IRS REFUNDS

Within the next few weeks, you may receive an official-looking email claiming to provide information about your refund. Don't open it, even if it looks like it is from the IRS. This is a common tactic employed by crooks to steal your identity. The IRS does not notify taxpayers about their refunds by e-mail.

A BAD BILL

HB 1212 HD1, SD1, amends a section of our Hawaii Revised Statutes which addresses information compiled as part of an inquiry into an individual's fitness to be granted or to retain a license. What was public till now, the record of complaints including all dispositions has been crossed out and these words added: but in the case of persons licensed under title 25, only the record of complaints resolved against that person would be public.

Both the testimonies of the Office of Information Practices and the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs confirm our concern about removing from public record, the kind of information necessary for individuals considering hiring professionals to perform certain services. From the time complaints are lodged to the resolution of these complaints, much time may pass, time in which the complaints are not available to persons who need that information.

This is awaiting the Governor's signature or veto.



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

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WORKING TOGETHER TO HELP OTHERS

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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 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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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