



WORKING TOGETHER TO HELP OTHERS

PLEASE JOIN US FOR LUNCH

Monday, March 23, 2015

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

11:55 Welcome, Introductions and Remarks, Larry Geller, President

12:00 Program: Nalani Aki on "Update on the Elderly Affairs Division, City and County of Honolulu, Aging and Disability Resource Center." Nalani Aki is the County Executive for the Elderly Affairs Division, City and County of Honolulu. She was previously a chief planner at EAD.

An ADRC is intended as a single point of entry available in every community across the country where people of all ages, incomes and disabilities go to get information on the full range of long-term support options. The ADRC simplifies access to either public or private resources.

1:00 Adjourn

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

TIME TO PAY YOUR 2015 KOKUA COUNCIL DUES. Individual dues; \$10.00. Lifetime: \$100, Organization: \$25.00. **Note:** The date on your mailing label above may be incorrect. We are working to fix this. Send payments to Kokua Council, Harris Methodist Church, 20 S. Vineyard, Blvd., Honolulu HI 96813. Donations are welcome.

Check our website at www.kokuacouncil.org

Inside:

- **Hawaii's nursing homes: not quite "Best in the nation"**
- **Department of Health starts posting healthcare facility reports**
- **Homelessness decriminalization bills cross from the Senate to the House**

Hawaii's nursing homes: not quite "Best in the nation"



A front-page story in the February 25, 2015 Star-Advertiser claimed that Hawaii's nursing homes were the best in the nation.

Unfortunately, that's not true. In fact, a June 29, 2014 story in the same paper reported that the Department of Health faced a \$121,000 fine because it failed to inspect more than a third of Hawaii's nursing homes as required by federal law. That earlier story reported that 12 nursing homes had not had their "annual" inspection for 22 months and that two of those had not been inspected for nearly three years. How can we be "best" without the inspections that might prove it?

The Hawaii "best in the nation" headline was wrong anyway, since under the limited measure described in the story, the District of Columbia, not Hawaii, came out on top.

Kokua Council continues, with your support, to advocate for better inspections of both nursing homes and care homes (which the newspaper article confused with nursing homes).

Department of Health starts posting healthcare facility reports

Care homes, as opposed to nursing homes, are smaller operations, providing a type of residential care. Kokua Council and other senior advocacy organizations have long fought for unannounced inspections and posting of the reports for these facilities as the only effective way the public can know if there are any problem spots. A 2013 law required posting of reports starting January 1, 2015 but the Department of Health did not comply with the law and did not post reports. The Legislature appropriated \$148,000 in 2013 for the DOH to implement the law but DOH did not even hire the people needed to do the work.

Posting of reports delayed

Civil Beat reported in *Ige Backpedals On Posting Care-Home Inspection Reports Online* (2/15/2015) that even though candidate Ige had promised he would "ensure the law is executed immediately because seniors in adult care must be ensured a safe environment when they may be entering vulnerable years," his package of legislative bills included two that would let the DOH delay until July 1 and would remove the requirement that all reports be posted.

Reaction from seniors and advocates was strong, confronting the Governor on his promise. As a result, the DOH asked the Legislature to defer the two bills and stated that they intend to start posting inspection reports by mid-March 2015.

Some reports have just been posted at <http://health.hawaii.gov/ohca/inspection-reports/>. Only reports completed after January 1 will be posted, and only after a correction plan, if needed, is accepted by DOH. And of course, these reports are for announced inspections.

Posting of the reports is critical to families that suddenly find they have an emergency situation and need to place a relative in a facility where they can be cared for.

Work still to be done

Hawaii remains the only state requiring advance notice for care home inspections. Please support advocacy organizations that push for unannounced inspections at the Legislature.

Homelessness decriminalization bills cross from the Senate to the House

Three bills created in reaction to the City and County of Honolulu's ordinances that criminalize homelessness have passed over from the Senate to the House. If the bills are to become law, they will require substantial support from advocates and those who don't believe it should be a crime to be without a roof over one's head.

Senate Bill 1014 defines specific rights granted to a person who is houseless including equal access to housing, jobs, and shelters, equal treatment by government agencies, and access to life-sustaining activities and essential services.

Senate Bill 273 allows the examiner of drivers to accept a sworn statement from a victim services organization, an attorney, a member of the clergy, correctional institution staff, or a medical or health professional as documentary evidence of a homeless person's address or date of birth. This bill would assist the many individuals whose ID and other papers have been illegally tossed into garbage trucks by city workers.

Senate Bill 269 establishes the process and grounds for a person to petition the court to vacate a conviction for obstructing or occupying a public place on grounds that the person was homeless at the time of committing the offense. This bill would cleanse the record of persons falling victim to Honolulu's sit-lie ordinance, for example. Those with criminal records are barred from holding many jobs and have trouble finding housing, etc.

Behind these three bills is the recognition that criminalizing the homeless does not cure homelessness--it exacerbates it. Criminalization also costs taxpayers significantly more than evidence-based solutions such as Housing First.

To support these bills, go online to capitol.hawaii.gov. The first task will be to urge the House to hear these bills. And then, of course, to submit testimony in support.



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

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WORKING TOGETHER TO HELP OTHERS

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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., Ample parking and a light lunch are provided for \$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 Larry Geller, 540-1928, lgeller@igc.org
 Vice President Laura Manis, 597-8838, manis@lava.net
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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 Member __ \$10.00 Life Member __ \$100.00 Organizational Member __ \$25.00

Donations: 501(c)(4) Advocacy _____ Education Fund: 501(c)(3) _____ (Tax Deductible)
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Mail to: Treasurer, Kokua Council, Harris United Methodist Church, 20 S. Vineyard Blvd., Honolulu, HI 96813