



WORKING TOGETHER TO HELP OTHERS

Please join us for lunch

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2008

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: Hawaiian Stew, Vegetarian chili, Salad, Drinks, Dessert by Eloise \$5.00 Donation

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

12:00 PROGRAM: Noemi Pendleton, Director, Executive Office on Aging: "Helping the Elderly in an Economic Recession," & Jim Shon: Report from Asset Building Task Force.

1:00 Adjourn and Announcement: No December Luncheon—Happy Holidays!

Board meeting: 10:00 a.m. preceding lunch. Board Retreat: December 15, 2008, 9:00 a.m.

NOTES FROM FIFTH ANNUAL COMMUNITY FORUM— OCTOBER 20, 2008
THIS YEAR WAS DIFFERENT

The fifth annual Kokua Council Community Legislative Forum brought together over 60 representatives of government, community organizations and concerned individuals to discuss community needs and concerns and to share ideas for legislative action in the coming session. The discussion this year of both the panelists and the audience were colored by the concern of everyone for a budget shortfall, the economic crisis and personal worries about making ends meet.

The Forum helps Kokua Council identify those issues that should have top legislative priorities for our organization. And, finally, the Forum is a way to encourage organizations to work together to achieve common goals and objectives. Kokua Council will continue to support past issues that are still pending. The following presents a summary of the issues presented.

Speaker Calvin Say related the worries of his constituents as he walked door-to-door in his district. "The reality is all cost except gasoline is 30% higher. At the end of last year's session there was a \$3.9 million surplus, by 2009 there will be a \$160 million deficit. This has already had an impact on Keiki health. If there is no work, there is no money. No money can lead to abuse." He believes every child should have access to health care and education.

Rep. Marilyn Lee, Co-Chair of the Joint Legislative Committee for Aging in Place: the committee is spearheading studies on Kupuna Care, grandparents raising grandchildren, paid family leave for working caregivers, cash and counseling (enabling families to choose services), compiling a Respite Inventory and Aging and Disability Resource Center progress update. These studies will provide the basis for making

legislative decisions. JLCAP is looking into licensing home care agencies, access to healthcare, education and safe homes.

Bruce Bottorff, AARP: Supports the Long Term Commission financing (see below), access, and quality, support for expanding home and community-based services options for long term care, developing workforce for long term care, pedestrian safety and grandparents raising grandchildren.

Q and A: Support legislators' pay raise? Say: "I will recommend the raise be suspended for two years if I am still speaker". (*You heard it here first*).

Why are long term care facilities so expensive here? Lee: We have fewer facilities and higher standards than most states. Medicaid pays for a disproportionate number of patients to go to nursing homes.

Say: How to handle the deficit in funds? Look at all the tax credits to see which can be eliminated, furlough employees rather than lay them off; no gambling; maintain health, human services and education.

Suggestion from audience: Change drug policy to treatment instead of high-cost incarceration.

John McDermott, LTC Ombudsman: Public posting of results of inspections of care homes and foster homes to help families decide. Too many complaints of case manager fees, these should be reexamined; wants another LTC Ombudsman on a neighbor island; funeral trusts need more regulation.

Eudie Schick, PABEA Legislative Committee of Executive Office on Aging: Support for grandparents raising grandchildren, support and release of funds for the LTC Commission, Kupuna Care, ADRC (1-stop access), Department of Aging, LTC ombudsman.

Wes Lum, Caregivers Initiative: Develop respite services for caregivers, cash and counseling (consumer choice), paid family leave for employed caregivers, grandparents raising grandchildren and the one stop center (ADRC).

Bruce McCullough, Hawaii Alliance for Retired Americans (HARA) as read by Laura Manis: Financing LTC, support for family caregivers and community services, reductions in Rx drugs, universal health care, LTC Ombudsman, a Department of Aging and regulating prepaid funeral trusts.

Rev. Bob Nakata, FACE: Concerned about the new Expanded Care Quest program. Clients have only 2 choices, why did the 2 mainland companies get a tax rebate? How will they provide services on neighbor islands with few service providers? Increase Medicaid reimbursements to doctors and hospitals; universal health care.

Pat Urieff, Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: Grandparents need children's programs, financial assistance, respite, and rights with emphasis on policies that assist grandparents who are sole providers for their grandchildren.

Jody Mishan: Build a *pro bono* relationship of financial professionals who would be willing to adopt a family caregiver and provide continuing financial assessment, counseling and tax help.

Alex Santiago, PHOCUSED, Protecting Hawaii's Ohana, Under-Served, Elderly and Disabled: Develop a unified, collective force leading to public policy actions statewide. It plans to train, mobilize and work collaboratively with government officials, elective officers, public agencies and concerned citizens to develop and sustain an effective system of services to address the health and human service needs throughout the state.

Ballot Results: The audience was asked to list their top 3 issues of concern to give guidance to the Kokua Council Board in selecting priorities to pursue in the 2009 legislative session. Because of the wide range of concerns, the issues have been arbitrarily listed in 5 categories in order of a compilation of the most votes.

1. Caregiver Support (16) includes: Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, respite services, release of funds for Kupuna Care, tax credits for caregivers, paid family leave and financial security.
2. Financial Security (14): Maintaining Social Security, raising taxes on higher brackets, affordable housing, concern regarding the high cost of food and housing, against gambling, change drug policy from high cost of incarceration to lower cost of treatment, affordable mass transit.
3. Health (12): Support for universal health, lower Rx costs, raise Medicaid and Medicare reimbursement, concern regarding Quest Expanded Care, help for single people with no caregiver.

4. Long Term Care (12) Funding for services, one stop center (ADRC), aging in place, workforce development, and case management, cabinet level Department of Aging.
 5. Safety/Abuse (9) Pedestrian safety, LTC Ombudsman expansion to neighbor islands and publishing evaluations of care and foster homes, domestic violence, regulation of Prepaid Funeral Trusts.
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Long Term Care Commission Update—Les Ihara, Jr.

On October 20, the Long Term Care Commission met and elected Stuart Ho chair, John Henry Felix and Dr. Pat Blanchette vice chairs; and a six-person executive committee consisting of the chair, vice-chairs, members Tony Kreig, Robin Campaniano, and Eldon Wegner. The six members include two representatives for each appointing authority—House, Senate, and Governor.

The commission authorized Stuart Ho and several others to seek private funding to support the commission's work, because the governor has said she would not release the appropriated \$100,000. The commission will proceed in its work if sufficient private funds can be raised. AARP has indicated they would contribute \$50,000. The chair will call executive committee meetings and the next commission meeting. *(However, it is important that the administration honor their commitment to support this commission whose findings will be in the best interests of the State.)*

Looking for Financial Consultants Willing to Donate their Expertise

Many family caregivers cannot afford to hire a CPA or get financial advice on a sustained basis. If they have an extra \$50, it will go to medical supplies or food.

The financial downward spiral of caregiving can be devastating; and these are people helping our community save money. Giving love and care 24/7 is important work, for no compensation. We must, as a community, find creative ways to reach out.

We are looking for volunteer financial professionals to help.

By just "adopting" one family caregiver per year, a financial consultant would be doing this family a world of good, helping to prevent future disaster and maintain dignity.

Eventually, The Hawaii Caregiver Coalition will be approaching large financial firms, unions, associations, even tax lawyers and banks, to participate.

If you know of a financial professional or leader that would like to join in and be part of this initiative, please call or e-mail Jody Mishan at 988-3295, or jmishan@hawaii.rr.com

Commissions for Insurance Agents May Determine Which Part D Plan You Get

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced plans last week to take regulatory action to address concerns over the commissions of Medicare Advantage sales agents. As of September 15, CMS declared that first year commissions could not exceed 200% of an agent's commission for the next five years. This removes incentive for agents to move beneficiaries between different plans each year. According to the Kaiser Daily Health Policy Report, some plans are increasing commissions in order to lock seniors in for five years. The House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Health Chair Pete Stark (D-CA) expressed his concern, stating that the increased commissions will lead to "an unprecedented amount of churning of beneficiary enrollment, in a way that is disruptive to their care and detrimental to their coverage."

Second Stimulus Package May be Coming, May Include Medicaid Assistance

Momentum may be picking up for the congressional passage of a new economic stimulus package, and it may include a provision increasing Medicaid. According to CQ HealthBeat, Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke did not officially support the inclusion of the provision when endorsing a second stimulus package before the House Budget Committee last week, but did say the insertion of federal dollars into state services would help the nation's uncertain economy. State officials say the deepening downturn makes the inclusion of Medicaid funds more critical.

**NO LUNCHEON MEETING IN DECEMBER. SEE YOU JANUARY 26, 2009
HAPPY HOLIDAYS!**



Kokua Council for Senior Citizens
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WORKING TOGETHER TO HELP OTHERS

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	LIFE MEMBER	ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERS	DONATIONS _____
___\$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.,
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