

POLICY ADVISORY BOARD FOR ELDER AFFAIRS (PABEA)
IN-PERSON AND VIA ZOOM
No. 1 Capitol District | 250 South Hotel Street | Conference Room 410
Friday, February 7, 2025 | 12:00 noon

MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER: Suzie Schulberg called the meeting to order at 12:04 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Appointed members present: Poki'i Balaz, William Kinaka, Stephen Lung (joined the meeting in-person at 12:30 p.m.), Sara Lenzer Medeiros, Shelly Ogata, Suzie Schulberg, Marilyn Seely, Barbara Service (joined the meeting via Zoom at 12:12 p.m.), Gary Simon, Lisa Spencer, Leslie Tanoue, and Raelene Tenno.

Appointed members excused and absent: Beverly Gotelli, Louise Johnson, Rick Tabor, Charlene Taketa.

(A quorum was established as ten members were present at roll call. This board requires eight members to be present in order to establish quorum.)

Ex-officio members present: Paula Cerio, Department of Health (DOH); Kathy Ishihara, Department of Human Services (DHS); and Christy Nishita, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Center on Aging (COA).

Executive Office on Aging (EOA) staff and Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) staff present: Derrick Ariyoshi, Caroline Cadirao, Rowena Dagdag-Andaya, Emily Ishida, Norma Kop, Josephine Lum, Lynn Niitani, Lauryn Reich, Lani Sakamoto, Tani Salazar, Erin Samura (Executive Assistant for Health, Equity, and Human Services, County of Hawai'i), Cristina Valenzuela, Jazlyn Wandasan, Jason Wong, and Jeffrey Woodland.

Guests present: Meredith Nichols, Assistant Administrator, Med-QUEST Division, Department of Human Services (DHS).

RECESS: Suzie recessed the meeting at 12:08 p.m.

CALL TO MEETING BACK TO ORDER: Suzie Schulberg called the meeting back to order at 12:12 p.m.

PRESENTATION: Med-QUEST Division Briefing for PABEA, Meredith Nichols, Assistant Administrator, Med-QUEST Division, (DHS). (Presentation attached.)

Meredith reported that the Federal Payment Management Services (PMS) was not accessible for at least a day when the Federal funding freeze was announced. Federal funding might be delayed as requests for payment might be examined. Hawaii has not experienced delays. Meredith's email is mnichols@dhs.hawaii.gov. DHS is examining the impact of potential scenarios, e.g. mandating of work requirements; changes in Federal matching rates.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

The draft minutes of the January 10, 2025 in-person and Zoom PABEA meeting were approved as circulated.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING (EOA) DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Attached is Caroline's report.

Caroline reported that the Federal Payment Management System (PMS) was overwhelmed due to high electronic traffic to PMS when the Federal funding freeze was announced. EOA was able to request funds. EOA has experienced a delay in receiving requested funds. EOA has met with the AAAs to discuss their priorities and PMS. EOA has had no communication with the Administration for Community Living (ACL) since the new Presidential administration has assumed office. PMS has decreased its hours. EOA operations and staff continue "business as usual," i.e. "continue to do good work." EOA will examine its priorities if its budget is reduced. EOA receives approximately \$7.9 million in Older Americans Act Title III and Title VII funds, an additional \$800,000 thousand for the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) and Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP), and \$19 to \$20 million in State funds. The AAAs will prioritize services, then prioritize participants, and then prioritize services that are needed by each participant.

CHAIR'S REPORT

No Chair's report was presented.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Barbara reported that the Committee met this morning with a quorum present. The proposed PABEA legislative priorities and lead PABEA advocates are:

- Falls Prevention - Barbara
- Hawai'i Retirement Savings Program - Gary
- Paid Family Leave – Gary
- Disaster Preparedness – Rick and Sara
- EOA's Administrative Budget – Barbara
- Medi-Medi Project – Stephen
- Caregiver Tax Credit – Gary
- Medicaid In-Home Services – Barbara
- State Rent Supplement Program for Kupuna – No lead yet.
- Hawai'i Food Security Special Fund – Barbara
- Hearing Aids – Rick

Approval of the aforementioned proposed PABEA legislative priorities will be included in the agenda for the next PABEA meeting.

PLANS AND PROJECT REVIEW COMMITTEE

Shelly submitted minutes of the Committee's January meeting. The Committee discussed unlicensed care facilities and the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. John McDermott provided a presentation on long term care issues and his experiences.

RECOGNITION AND AWARDS COMMITTEE (RAC):

Barbara reported that the Committee met yesterday. Barbara provided highlights from Rick's report on the meeting (attached). The Older Americans Month celebration is scheduled for June 13, 2025. The 2025 Older Americans Month (OAM) theme is "Flip the Script on Aging." Lanakila Multi-Purpose Senior Center will provide entertainment, including singing "O Kou Aloha No" (The Queen's Prayer), "Over the Rainbow", and "What a Wonderful World."

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

No unfinished business was brought before the Board.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business was brought before the Board.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

No public testimony was offered.

APPOINTED MEMBERS' REPORTS

Sara commented that she knows little about homelessness. When she was a teacher, she learned that many of her students were homeless. However, many of these students and their families had access to food and meals. Through an encounter with a homeless woman, she learned about and visited the Friendly Place. Most participants at the Friendly Place were females. She learned that Hawaii has the highest homeless rate in the nation, including the highest homeless rate for females. She authored a report on advancing policies and programs in support of homeless women (attached). She hopes that PABEA can advocate for policies and program in support of homeless women, including helping homeless female seniors overcome challenges.

Raelene related the story of her homeless father and the inadequate services he received from agencies supporting the homeless.

Caroline asked all PABEA members to review Sara's report.

EOA will examine the Governor's plan and identify items in his plan addressing homeless women and homeless kupuna with which EOA and PABEA can align its efforts. EOA will also identify any gaps in the plan for policies and programs in support of homeless kupuna.

Erin reported that Hawaii County has a housing shortage and is examining how to partner more effectively with community agencies to support the homeless.

PABEA will consider an ad hoc committee on homelessness seniors.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS' REPORTS

Christy entered in the Zoom chat that she has no report from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

Attached are Department of Health updates from Paula. Paula entered in the Zoom chat that she has nothing additional to report from the Department of Health.

Kathy has no report from Department of Human Services.

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU ELDERLY AFFAIRS DIVISION (EAD)

Attached is Derrick's report.

HAWAI'I COUNTY OFFICE ON AGING (HCOA)

Attached is the February Executive Report for HCOA.

Erin shared the story of a female kupuna who fell in her apartment and was transferred to Hilo Benioff Medical Center. Upon her discharge, she contacted the ADRC to seek her options. The ADRC promptly assisted her by referring her to Kupuna Care services through a case management contractor for in-home care. She was connected to transportation and nutrition services through the County of Hawaii Parks and Recreation Division's Elderly Activities. Recognizing the need for support in the future, she was also provided with the elderly housing list. She expressed immense gratitude for the care and assistance she received from our county ADRC.

KAUAI AGENCY ON ELDERLY AFFAIRS (KAEA)

Attached is Emily's January 2025 Executive Report for KAEA.

Emily reported that KAEA has hired a case manager. KAEA is now almost fully staffed. KAEA is working with Keali'i Lopez of AARP Hawai'i, the Kauai Fire Department, and the Kauai Emergency Management Agency on ways to address disaster preparedness. KAEA might focus on shelters, evacuation routes, and alert notifications, especially as hurricane season approaches.

MAUI COUNTY OFFICE ON AGING (MCOA)

Attached is Rowena's Maui County Executive's report for February 2025.

Rowena provided a highlight from her report:

MCOA received a phone call from the Director of Services at Hale Makua who was seeking assistance for a patient being evicted from her rental unit while she was receiving rehabilitation services at Hale Makua. Her landlord came to Hale Makua with all her belongings and told the patient that she no longer lives in the landlord's home. MCOA worked with the Hale Makua Director of Social Services and offered resources, which included Legal Aid and Maui Mediation Services, for support and assistance with the rental agreement. They called Rowena a few days later and said that the patient did not want to pursue legal or mediation services because she did not have a formal rental agreement with the landlord. She only wanted help with housing resources and rental assistance. MCOA offered suggestions. She was able to find a unit and receive support from an agency that provides wraparound support and sheltering. This

case highlights the vulnerability of many seniors and persons with disabilities who are in similar situations in which they have informal rental agreements or no rental agreements at all. MCOA has a new Program Specialist who previously was the Homeless Coordinator for the County of Maui. Rowena brainstormed with him on other steps to take and on outreach education. MCOA will begin working with its interdisciplinary teams, the public health nurses, and aging network partners to inform them of evictions and to collaborate on developing proactive measures. Action items are included in Rowena's report. Network partners also can consider the action items. One action item is to strengthen tenant education. Another is to enhance housing and navigation services and to expand rental assistance outreach, which seem to be a frequent request to MCOA. MCOA is developing a crisis response protocol for these urgent calls. Advocacy is needed to inform legislators of these vulnerable populations that need protection from informal rental agreements. MCOA will strengthen community partnerships and is creating a resource guide.

Rowena wrote letters to all members of Hawaii's Congressional delegation to inform them of the negative impact that the Federal funding freeze has on Maui County, especially the negative impact on Maui's vulnerable populations, including Native Hawaiians.

Rowena recently learned of the Federal Transit Administration Section 5310 Program, which provides funding to states and designated recipients to meet the transportation needs of older adults and people with disabilities when the transportation service provided is unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate to meeting these needs. Nonprofit organizations which provide transportation services to seniors might want to contact the Federal Transit Administration to learn more about the program.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Kupuna Caucus, Friday, February 7, 2025, 2:00 p.m. via Zoom
- PABEA Monthly Meeting, Friday, March 7, 2025, 12:00 p.m.
- Hawaii Association of the Blind Convention, March 6 – 7, 2025.
On behalf of the Hawaii Association of the Blind (HAB), Marilyn requested a representative from EOA to attend the convention to be available to talk about resources. HAB Board Member Vickie Kennedy is available to speak in public service announcements (PSAs).

ADJOURNMENT OF PABEA MEETING

Suzie adjourned the meeting at 2:00 p.m.