

**DRAFT**

POLICY ADVISORY BOARD FOR ELDER AFFAIRS (PABEA)  
IN-PERSON AND VIA ZOOM  
No. 1 Capitol District | 250 South Hotel Street | Conference Room 410  
Friday, April 4, 2025 | 12:00 noon

**MEETING MINUTES**

CALL TO ORDER: Beverly Gotelli called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Appointed members present: Beverly Gotelli, William Kinaka, Louise Johnson, Sara Lenzer Medeiros, Shelly Ogata, Marilyn Seely, Barbara Service, Gary Simon, Lisa Spencer, Rick Tabor, Leslie Tanoue, and Raelene Tenno.

Appointed members excused and absent: Poki'i Balaz, Stephen Lung, Suzie Schulberg, and Charlene Taketa.

(A quorum was established as twelve 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); and Kathy Ishihara, Department of Human Services (DHS).

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, John McDermott, Jan Mori, 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: Percy Ihara, Executive Director, Akamai Seniors; Ed Motosue, Vice President, Financial Benefits Insurance; and Audrey Suga-Nakagawa, Advocacy Associate Director, AARP Hawaii.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

The draft of the minutes of the March 7, 2025 in-person and Zoom PABEA meeting was approved as circulated.

EOA DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Attached is Caroline's report.

Caroline commented that April is National Volunteer Month. Caroline thanked PABEA members for their support of EOA and PABEA.

On March 27, 2025, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) announced a reorganization of the Administration for Community Living (ACL). ACL houses the Administration on Aging, the Center for Innovation and Partnership, the Administration on

Disabilities, and the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research ( ACL organization chart.attached) These four programs have ten regional offices. In the reorganization, the number of regional offices will be reduced from ten to five and 20,000 full-time jobs in DHHS will be cut. On April 1, 2025, DHHS announced the elimination of ACL. EOA reports to the Region 9 Office. Region 9 was eliminated. However, the Hawaii State Plan on Aging was approved. Potential impacts of the reorganization and elimination of ACL include lack of transparency, delays in drawdowns of Federal funds, and delays in the announcements of awarding of Federal funds. EOA was expecting its State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) award on March 31, 2025. EOA has received an email announcing that the award will be sent but is delayed. The largest threat to EOA is that the Older Americans Act (OAA) has not been reauthorized. The Act expired in 2024. EOA is extremely vulnerable with the expiration of the Act. EOA and the Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) will be strategically planning for different scenarios (e.g. a 25 percent reduction in funding; a 50 percent reduction in funding) and how to continue services to those with the greatest needs. At today's Kupuna Caucus meeting, Caroline will present EOA's accomplishments in Fiscal Year 2024 and the potential impact of the DHHS reorganization on the State's direct service programs and on the long-term services and supports that are provided in the community through the AAAs. EOA will be developing messaging for public awareness. EOA will also be scheduling a roundtable discussion with Hawaii's Congressional delegation. Caroline has instructed the EOA staff to continue their excellent work and has offered her support to them.

### CHAIR'S REPORT

Beverly announced that she submitted testimony in favor of PABEA nominees and on several bills. The Hawaii Pacific Gerontological Society (HPGS) Biennial Conference is scheduled for September 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Several people who attend PABEA meetings are active with and in this conference. Beverly proposes rescheduling the September meeting from September 5, 2025 to Wednesday, September 10, 2025. A vote on the proposal will be included in the May PABEA meeting. The conference has been held biennially for the last 30 years. Information presented is not only about gerontology but is applicable to everyday life.

Derrick suggested that rescheduling the PABEA meeting also incentivizes PABEA members and AAA staff to attend the conference. Sandy Markwood, CEO of USAging, might be the keynote speaker at the conference.

Percy commented that PABEA met in a side room at a previous HPGS conference.

Beverly agreed to discuss at the next PABEA meeting the possibility of having the September PABEA meeting at the HPGS conference if a room is available.

### LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Barbara reported that the Committee met this morning. The Committee discussed aging related bills:

- HB 300 HD 1 Governor's State Budget. EOA's Administrative budget is included in the Governor's State budget. EOA budget line items include requests to convert several temporary positions to full time, permanent positions (e.g. SHIP Program Specialist V, 3 SMP Program Specialist positions, and Long-Term Care Planner). HB 300 HD 1 passed the Senate Ways and Means Committee and will crossover to the House.
- HB 705 HD 1 SD 1 Medi-Medi Project establishes a temporary Medi-Medi Project within the Hawai'i State Health Insurance Assistance Program to be administered by the Executive

Office on Aging to assist older adults, Medicare beneficiaries, individuals with disabilities, and other underserved populations who may qualify for various low-income subsidy programs to gain access to their benefits. HB 705 HD 1 SD 1 passed the Senate Ways and Means Committee and will crossover to the House.

- HB 701 HD 3 SD 1 Caregiver Tax Credit establishes a Family Caregiver Tax Credit for nonpaid family caregivers. HB 701 HD 3 SD 1 passed the Senate Ways and Means Committee and will crossover to the House. The bill includes covenants that EOA shall maintain records of the total amount of qualified expenses for each taxpayer claiming a credit; verify the amount of the qualified expenses claimed; total all qualified expenses claimed; certify the total amount of the tax credit for each taxable year; and issue a certificate to the taxpayer verifying the qualified expenses and the credit amount certified for each taxable year.
- HB 702 HD 1 appropriates funds to increase the funding for Medicaid in-home services, conditioned on the Department of Human Services obtaining the maximum federal matching funds. The bill is dead for this year.
- HB 703 HD 1 SD 1 State Rent Supplement Program for Kupuna extends the sunset date for the State Rent Supplement Program for Kupuna to June 30, 2028. HB 703 HD 1 SD 1 passed the Senate Ways and Means Committee and will crossover to the House.
- HB 474 HD 2 SD 1 Falls Prevention Appropriates funds to the Department of Health to fund the current Fall Prevention Campaign. HB 474 HD 2 SD 1 passed the Senate Ways and Means Committee and will crossover to the House.
- SB 855 SD 1 HD 1 Hawai'i Retirement Savings Program: Clarifies the definition of "covered employer" under the Hawai'i Retirement Savings Act. Requires covered employers to automatically enroll covered employees into the Hawai'i Retirement Savings Program unless the employee opts out. Repeals the limit on the total fees and expenses that can be spent for the Program each year. Appropriates funds to the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations for the development and operation of the Program. SB 855 SD 1 HD 1 passed the House Finance Committee and will crossover to the Senate.
- HCR 179, HR 175, SCR 145 SD 1, and SR 117 SD 1 Paid Family and Medical Leave Working Group: Requesting the Senate Standing Committee on Labor and Technology and House of Representatives Standing Committee on Labor to convene a legislative working group to develop recommendations for establishing and implementing a Paid Family and Medical Leave Program for the State. SCR 145 crossed over to the House. The Senate adopted SR 117 SD 1.
- SB 1494 SD 2 Hearing Aids: Requires health insurance policies and contracts issued on or after January 1, 2026 to provide optional coverage for the cost of hearing aids at a minimum \$1,500 per hearing aid for each hearing-impaired ear every thirty-six months. SB1494 SD2 is dead for this year.
- HCR 37/SCR 22 Disaster Preparedness. HCR 37 crossed over to the Senate. SCR 22 crossed over to the House.
- HB 700 HD 1 SD 1 Cognitive Assessments for Early Detection of Dementia: Establishes a Cognitive Assessments for Medicare Beneficiaries Pilot Program within the Executive Office on Aging. HB 700 HD 1 SD 1 passed the Senate Ways and Means Committee and will crossover to the House.
- SB 1252 SD 2 HD 1 ADRD Training for Healthcare Providers: Appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i to establish positions for the University of Hawai'i at Manoa John A. Burns School of Medicine's Department of Geriatric Medicine to provide coordination between the University of Hawai'i's programs that provide training on Alzheimer's disease and dementia. SB1252 SD2 HD1 passed the House Finance Committee and will crossover to the Senate.

- HR 30/HCR 31 and SR 163/SCR 203 request the University of Hawaii at Manoa to investigate the feasibility of establishing an Alzheimer's Disease Research Center. The House adopted HR 30. The Senate adopted SR 163. SCR 203 crossed over to the House.

Barbara reported that Senator Joy San Buenaventura provided a presentation on the status of health and human services bills and aging-related bills at this morning's Legislative Committee meeting.

#### PLANS AND PROJECTS REVIEW COMMITTEE (PPRC)

Shelly reported that the March PPRC meeting minutes were approved and will be submitted. The Committee discussed impact of DHHS cuts and reductions on services.

#### RECOGNITION AND AWARDS COMMITTEE (RAC)

Rick reported that Older Americans Month (OAM) county celebrations are scheduled for May 2025. He provided a status report of the planning for the Older Americans Month Celebration at 15 Craigside on June 13, 2025 from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Rick encourages all PABEA members to attend and assist at the event. The Governor is not available to attend the celebration. A Governor's proclamation will be requested. Lieutenant Governor Sylvia Luke will attend. Three swag bags will be assembled for presentation to the Kumu, the emcee (Cory Chun), and the photographer (Greg Yamamoto). Rick requests gift items from the AAAs which are representative of their respective islands for the swag bags. Rick will include a Visa debit card in the swag bag. Lunch will be provided at no charge to attendees compliments of 15 Craigside. Lunch fare offered will be regular, vegetarian, and diabetic. Seats will be reserved with name tents. Attendees who switch seats are asked to take their name tents with them to the new seats to ensure that they receive the correct meal. The Committee is drafting an invitation and an RSVP. The final count is due to 15 Craigside on May 30, 2025. RSVPs are due on May 27, 2025. Rick asks the AAAs send him the names, high-definition photographs, and a brief bio of the honorees. Rick will prepare a script for the emcee and will draft the program with EOA. The photo posters of honorees will be displayed. AAA executives and one guest will be invited. Honorees and one guest will be invited. The Kumu will begin the celebration with an oli. Entertainers from Lanakila Multi-Purpose Senior Center (LMPSC) will include dancers, ukulele players, and singers. The entertainers from LMPSC will sing *The Queen's Prayer* before lunch. Closing will include the singing of *Hawaii Aloha*. Provide swag bag gifts to Rick at the June PABEA meeting. Volunteers at Lanakila Multi-Purpose Senior Center are making eye lash lei for honorees and attendees who will be recognized.

Beverly requests that PABEA members let her know by May 2, 2025 whether or not they will be attending the OAM celebration.

#### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Review proposal on Homelessness and determine PABEA's role in this proposal. Consideration for an ad hoc committee or PPRC to explore this initiative further.

Beverly reported that EOA was unable to secure the Homeless Coordinator to speak at the PABEA meeting. EOA will continue to pursue his presence for the May PABEA meeting.

2. Adoption of the Nomination Committee for 2025 - 2026: Leslie Tanoue, Chair, Lisa Spencer, member and Stephen Lung, member.

The adoption of Leslie Tanoue as Chair and Lisa Spencer and Stephen Lung as members of the Nomination Committee was approved unanimously by the PABEA members in attendance.

The task of the Nomination Committee is to establish a slate of nominees of officers (Chair, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair) for PABEA for 2025 – 2026. The slate will be presented at the May PABEA meeting. Elections will be conducted by secret ballot at the June PABEA meeting. Those who attend via Zoom will vote electronically.

### NEW BUSINESS

No new business was offered.

### PUBLIC TESTIMONY

No public testimony was offered.

### APPOINTED MEMBERS' REPORTS

Rick commented that he is President of Hawaii Meals on Wheels (HMOW). HMOW is fortunate, having diversified long ago. However, other seniors might not receive meals. Although the impacts of Federal cuts are unknown, Rick is hopeful that the situation will resolve. HMOW CEO Michelle Cordero-Lee will provide a presentation at the Kupuna Caucus meeting today. Rick commented that he also is Vice President of Responsive Caregivers of Hawaii (RCH). The impacts of cuts also are affecting staff and clients of RCH. Rick drafted a document on the Federal cuts and mental health to help people cope with the current situation. He is willing to share the document with those who are interested.

Sara reported that she received a note from Sherry Goya of the Hawaii Pacific Gerontological Society (HPGS). The American Society on Aging (ASA) is collecting stories on the impact of not receiving Social Security every month. Stories can be about delays in receiving benefits, problems in receiving benefits, or anticipating what might happen if benefits are less than the amount that is normally received. Stories can be on video, written, or in an interview format. Sara will forward the email request from ASA to Caroline and Josephine for distribution to PABEA members.

### EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS' REPORTS

Kathy Ishihara reported that the State Medicaid administration is discussing and strategizing on possible program changes. Kathy has no further information at this time.

Attached is Department of Health report from Paula Cerio.

Attached is the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations report from Alan Burdick.

### CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU ELDERLY AFFAIRS DIVISION (EAD)

Attached is Derrick's report.

Derrick reported that EAD received a call a few weeks ago from a landlord seeking assistance for his tenant, an older woman. The tenant had cognitive issues and possible behavioral health

issues. She was not making rental payments. As a result, the landlord wanted to evict her. EAD performed an in-home visit with the tenant. After multiple visits, EAD learned more about the tenant and the landlord. After discussion and interviewing the landlord and the tenant, EAD learned that they shared a joint savings and checking account. After more discussion with the landlord and the tenant, EAD learned that a sale of the tenant's property to the landlord occurred after the tenant's husband had died. EAD consulted with Adult Protective Services (APS). After many conversations, APS initiated an investigation.

What the AAAs encounter as seemingly innocuous requests for assistance can result in layers of challenges for clients and EAD. The AAAs have finite resources, including finite staffing. The AAAs cannot be everything for everyone. The AAAs provide options counseling when we can. But, if no options can be provided, the AAAs do the best that they can to help older adults resolve these situations.

#### HAWAII COUNTY OFFICE OF AGING (HCOA)

Erin reported that HCOA continues to triage calls and help kupuna as best as possible. The programs that HCOA has in the community are island wide and include:

- The Healthy Aging Partnership and Better Choices, Better Health;
- ADRC visiting different areas (such as Hilo, Kona, and Pahala) to perform fall prevention training; and,
- Weekly community meetings. HCOA provides resource booklets, socialization guides, and refrigerator magnets on fall prevention to attendees. HCOA also partners with other county agencies (e.g. fire department, house, and mass transit) at these community meetings. HCOA assembles resource packets for residents to take home. HCOA recently began partnering with the Hawaii Island Fentanyl Task Force to provide education on opioid overdoses and Narcan as a sizable percentage of accidental overdoses are by kupuna. Hawaii Island Fentanyl Task Force members will be attending Hawaii County's Older Americans luncheon.

#### KAUAI AGENCY ON ELDERLY AFFAIRS (KAEA)

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

Emily reported that KAEA is focusing on planning a conference on elder abuse. The guest speaker will be Paul Greenwood, a former deputy district attorney. The conference will have three panels:

1. prosecuting attorneys from all of the Hawaii counties;
2. a housing panel of community health workers and the Kauai Housing Director; and
3. adult day care and long-term care communities.

Other community members will be asked to participate in the conference as well. The focus of the conference is informing and involving key community stakeholders. Staff from the Oahu APS office will be asked to attend. The conference is scheduled for Tuesday, June 24, 2025. June is Elder Abuse Month. Goals of the conference include identifying and addressing the gaps, understanding the challenges, and then forming a multidisciplinary team and obtaining a commitment from all team members to continue moving forward.

## MAUI COUNTY OFFICE ON AGING (MCOA)

MCOA had several visits and outreach events on Maui. Rowena shared stories that she also shared with Senator Schatz and Senator Hirono in letters sent to them yesterday in response to the reorganization at DHHS and potential negative impacts of the reorganization. MCOA met with Hale Mahaolu Akahi seniors and celebrated their birthdays. The seniors shared stories about their field trips and movie nights. MCOA shared information about their services. Rowena asked the seniors, "What kind of things would you like to talk about?" They said that they are really afraid of what will happen to Medicare and Social Security. One of the seniors said, "You know, they took away my telehealth, and that is what I relied on, so that I can meet with my doctor. Now I do not have anything." Rowena remarked that those are things that she cannot solve. Rowena mentioned to them that they need to organize and connect with their Congressional delegation and share your stories with the Congressional delegation. Rowena has begun sharing stories with Hawaii's Congressional delegation. The seniors also would like more technology classes and digital literacy classes. MCOA will begin developing programs and classes to teach seniors how to use email and how to connect with services online, especially Social Security offices. March 31, 2025 was the last day that beneficiaries could access the Maui Social Security office by phone. MCOA reached out to the Social Security Office to ask how MCOA can help seniors and community members with disabilities connect with Social Security. They shared ideas which Rowena included in her report.

An 87-year-old woman visited the MCOA office at the Cameron Center. She mentioned to Rowena about how her homeowner's association fees at her apartment complex were increasing by approximately \$400 a month because of all the insurance costs. She did not know how she would pay the homeowners association fees while supporting her 64-year-old disabled son and how she would make ends meet, including paying her utility expenses. MCOA connected her with SNAP and other services for which she was eligible. The State Rent Supplement Program for Kupuna bill that the Legislature is considering would be helpful. EOA, the AAAs, and PABEA need to capture these stories about the type of financial needs that our seniors experience, and to address these needs in the next legislative session.

MCOA also met with a caregiver whose mother recently was diagnosed with dementia. The mother currently receives adult daycare services through Title III funded programs. The caregiver mentioned that she heard that there will be cuts, i.e. caregivers are concerned.

A few months ago, Rowena learned of the passing of a caregiver who took care of his mother. For an exceptionally long time she had dementia. He decided to quit his job to care for his mother and live with her at home. He cared for his mother for approximately two years until she died while he was unemployed. He had not been seeking healthcare and was not receiving medical care. Approximately two months after his mother died, he died from a heart attack. Issues that caregivers need to consider are taking care of their health, and programs that are available for caregivers to seek appropriate medical attention for any ailments that they might have. MCOA provided him with as much as possible in terms of community-based services for his mother, but MCOA could not help him with his healthcare. Healthcare for caregivers needs to be examined and can be addressed in the legislature.

Situations similar to what Derrick shared occur on Maui. MCOA works with APS, the prosecutor's office, and the police department. MCOA meets monthly with its Elder Justice Team. Andrew Martin, the County of Maui Prosecuting Attorney, facilitates the Team. He reviews the list of outstanding cases from APS. For those outstanding cases that APS cannot address because of APS' limitations, the Elder Justice Team addresses. Next week is National

Crime Victims Week. In the past, the focus has been on abusive domestic violence, especially towards women and children. The Prosecuting Attorney also will focus on elder crime victims.

Policies and programs for continued rental assistance and financial assistance for elders, healthcare for caregivers, especially unemployed caregivers, and services to help seniors navigate Social Security and Medicare need to be examined and developed.

Beverly thanked the AAAs for their work supporting seniors in Hawaii.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Kupuna Caucus: Friday, April 4, 2025, 2:00 p.m. via Zoom.
- PABEA Monthly Meeting: Friday, May 2, 2025, 12:00 p.m.

#### ADJOURNMENT OF PABEA MEETING

Beverly adjourned the meeting at 1:03 p.m.