

POLICY ADVISORY BOARD FOR ELDER AFFAIRS (PABEA)  
IN-PERSON AND VIA ZOOM  
No. 1 Capitol District | 250 South Hotel Street | Conference Room 410  
Friday, August 1, 2025 | 12:00 p.m. (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, Stephen Lung, Sara Lenzer Medeiros, Shelly Ogata, Suzie Schulberg, Marilyn Seely, Barbara Service (joined the meeting after the roll was called), Gary Simon, Lisa Spencer, Rick Tabor, Leslie Tanoue, and Raelene Tenno.

Appointed members excused and absent: Poki'i Balaz and Charlene Taketa.

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

Ex-officio members present: Alan Burdick, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) Office of Community Services (OCS); Paula Cerio, Department of Health (DOH); Kathy Ishihara, Department of Human Services (DHS); Darrick Lam, Regional Administrator and Staff Director for Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services San Francisco; 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: Thomas Atou (City and County of Honolulu Elderly Affairs Division), Candice Bryant, Caroline Cadirao, Rowena Dagdag-Andaya, Emily Ishida, Norma Kop, Josephine Lum, John McDermott, Candace Nakamoto, Lani Sakamoto, Erin Samura (Executive Assistant for Health, Equity, and Human Services, County of Hawai'i), Jazlyn Wandasan, and Jeffrey Woodland.

Guests present: Jienelle Herndon, San Francisco Office of Program Operations and Local Engagement, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services San Francisco; Kathy Wyatt, President, Hale Hau'oli Hawai'i; and Hawaii Public Policy Advocates.

**APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:**

The draft minutes of the July 11, 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 provided highlights from her report:

- Administration for Community Living

- The Administration for Community Living (ACL) is transitioning under the umbrella of the newly formed *Administration for Children, Families, and Communities*.
- As of Monday, July 14, 2025, a federal Reduction in Force (RIF) has been implemented, resulting in the elimination of all Regional Offices; the Budget and Grants team; the Policy and Evaluation teams; and the majority of communications staff.
- EOA anticipates significant delays in the following areas: Information and communication, disbursement of funding, policy review, evaluation of reports, state plans, etc. No official communication regarding current points of contact or which staff members remain in place during this transition has been issued.
- Older Americans Act Funding: This year's funding is intact. EOA received its allotment based on the 2024 level. The President's proposed budget has the Federal FY 2026 funds allocated, without reduction, at the 2024 level. Although funding has not been reduced, the rising costs of doing business has caused an indirect reduction.
- Older Americans Act (OAA) Reauthorization: The Older Americans Act expired in 2024. Currently, reauthorization has bipartisan support for the Senate version of the OAA.
- Future of the Older Americans Act Presentation: EOA staff participated in a WellSky-hosted presentation titled "*The Future of the Older Americans Act*" by Kathy Greenlee of Advancing States. Kathy Greenlee was the first Administrator of the Administration for Community Living (ACL). ACL will become a program within the Administration for Children and Families.
- Honoring Lynn Niitani: On July 29, 2025, EOA celebrated Lynn Niitani, Volunteer Coordinator of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, honoring her 30 years of dedicated public service to the State. EOA also celebrated her retirement on July 31, 2025. Staff extended their best wishes to Lynn for her future.
- SHIP Open Enrollment Preparation: The SHIP program is actively preparing for the upcoming Fall Open Enrollment period. With continuing growth in the program, concerns about how recent changes to various safety net programs might impact individuals who are considering plan changes are increasing.
- Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Campaign Launch: The public awareness campaign on Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias will launch on August 4, 2025 and will feature a comprehensive media plan. The campaign aims to raise awareness about early signs of cognitive impairment and encourage conversations with healthcare providers about memory and brain health. Utilizing a multi-touch approach (television, digital video, audio, social media, and print), the campaign expects to generate approximately 49.8 million impressions.

## CHAIR'S REPORT

Beverly reported that she has been in communication with Caroline regarding the agenda and other matters that will be presented at today's meeting. Their biggest concern is ensuring that the monthly PABEA agenda is completed in a timely fashion and in compliance with Sunshine Law.

## LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Rick reported that the Committee met this morning and discussed expectations of the Committee and Committee members. At each meeting, the Committee would like to have a 15-minute presentation from someone associated with a bill that PABEA supports or might support. All PABEA members are welcome to attend these presentations. PABEA members who would like to add an item to the agenda are asked to notify Rick, Beverly, or Cristina well in advance of the meeting. Last second items cannot be added to the agenda. Bills which were passed and

bills which did not pass in the last session were reviewed today. The Committee will examine and consider supporting those bills/issues that did not pass. The leads for a few bills were designated today. Rick will continue to be the lead for hearing aid coverage and for Alzheimer's and dementia related issues. Gary will be the lead for legislation which are AARP priorities. At the October Committee meeting, a presentation will be provided by the Hawaii Legislative Reference Bureau (LRB) Public Access Room (PAR). The Committee encourages testimony from all PABEA members. For bill leads, Committee members include a preamble in their testimony. (*"I am [name], a member of the Policy Advisory Board for Elder Affairs (PABEA), which is an appointed board tasked with advising the Executive Office on Aging (EOA). My testimony does not represent the views of EOA but of PABEA."*) PABEA members who are not the lead for a bill can submit testimony as individual members of the public. Testifying in-person or via Zoom is more effective than only submitting written testimony. Testimony is especially important for bills which include an allocation of monies. The Committee meets from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. on the days of PABEA meetings.

#### PLANS AND PROJECTS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Lisa reported that the Committee's work on its proposed Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) report template for PABEA continues. The Committee will send the draft of the template to the AAA Executives and asks for feedback. The Committee would like to have a consistent template (framework) for the AAAs to use for their report. The template will require specific information which will help the Committee track the kind of programming and areas of programming performed by the AAAs. The template also will help the Committee to examine whether the programs are aligned with the goals of PABEA. Lisa thanked Emily on behalf of the Committee as the Committee is utilizing the Kauai Agency on Elder Affairs' report format as its proposed template.

#### RECOGNITION AND AWARDS COMMITTEE (RAC)

Rick reported that the Committee did not meet yesterday. The Committee will resume meeting in November.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: 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.

The issue is deferred until Appointed Members' Reports on today's agenda.

NEW BUSINESS: Review a proposal to change the Hawaii Revised Statutes 349-4 regarding the Policy Advisory Board for Elder Affairs number of meetings in a calendar year.

Caroline proposed changing Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) 349-4 from a minimum of 12 meetings per year to a minimum of 7 meetings per year which includes monthly meetings during the legislative session (February, March, and April): *"There shall be not less than ~~twelve~~ seven meetings of the board each year which include monthly meetings during the legislative session (February, March, and April)."* PABEA Committees will continue to meet monthly. Caroline commented that the proposal provides PABEA Committees more time for deliberations between PABEA meetings. Caroline will consult with Boards and Commissions in the Governor's office and with the Attorney General to ensure that the proposed change does not violate Boards and Commissions policies and procedures.

Beverly commented that Sunshine Law requires Committee meetings to be conducted in a hybrid format. PABEA members are asked to consider the proposal. The proposal will be included in the agenda under Unfinished Business for the September PABEA meeting.

Caroline will clarify with the Office of Information Practices (OIP) whether meetings can be conducted in in-person only format or in virtual only format. The issue is that anyone interested in attending a committee meeting has access to the meeting. Committees should be reporting on their meetings from the prior month to ensure that issues and items discussed at Committee meetings are included in the PABEA agenda.

### PUBLIC TESTIMONY

No public testimony was offered.

### APPOINTED MEMBERS' REPORTS

Raelene announced that Vencer Health now provides non-emergency transportation by appointment. Vencer Health's website is at [VencerHealth.com](http://VencerHealth.com).

Sara provided a presentation on a profile of homelessness in Hawaii, including statistics, myths, and how to approach and help the homeless. Attached is a preliminary report from Sara on unsheltered or barely sheltered elderly. The report includes statements from conversations with unsheltered/at risk seniors struggling to survive, myths, recommendations, challenges faced by female seniors experiencing homelessness, support services, and needed services. Sara will send her action proposals on how PABEA can help the homeless, especially female homeless, to Josephine for distribution to the PABEA members for the PABEA members to brainstorm additional proposals.

Erin commented that the counties do not have sufficient capacity nor sufficient funding to meet the needs of the homeless in the State adequately. Erin encourages PABEA to advocate legislatively for funding for homeless programs and services in the counties.

### EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS' REPORTS

Kathy Ishihara announced that the Big Beautiful Bill was signed into law by the President on July 4, 2025. The Bill includes Medicaid provisions, such as work requirements for Medicaid, and other financial stipulations. DHS, the State Legislature, and the Governor are ensuring access to healthcare for all in Hawaii. Kathy will work with Caroline to schedule a presentation to PABEA by Med-Quest Division Assistant Administrator Meredith Nichols on an update of the Medicaid provisions and stipulations included in the Big Beautiful Bill.

Alan announced that OCS will be receiving a small amount of additional money for the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP). Also, American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds from a subgrant from last year will be carried over to enroll a few applicants on the waitlist. OCS is working on the Farm to Foodbank Program in preparation of soliciting requests for proposals.

Darrick Lam introduced himself. He is the Regional Administrator and Staff Director for Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) San Francisco. He leads and coordinates local external engagement efforts with all regional stakeholders and customers in the States of Hawaii, Arizona, California, Nevada and the Pacific Territories. He also provides administrative

and operational support to CMS San Francisco employees, promoting cohesion and collaboration throughout the Region Office and with other CMS components. Darrick has served as the co-lead of the CMS Medicare open enrollment since October 2024. This year, he will serve as the co-lead of the CMS Medicare open enrollment along with the Regional Administrator of Boston. Darrick sends greetings from CMS Administrator Dr. Mahmet Oz, who began his tenure with CMS in April 2025. This year marks 60 years since Medicaid and Medicare were signed into law. Today, Medicare and Medicaid provide coverage for more than 160 million people and continue to be vital lifelines for older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income families in the U.S. The impact of Medicare and Medicaid is beyond access to healthcare. For example, Medicare played a key role in the desegregation of American hospitals. Within months of the law being signed, 90 percent of hospitals accepted African American patients, changing the healthcare landscape forever. Medicare and Medicaid helped launch coordinated care models that continue to improve patient outcomes today. As technology has evolved, Medicare and Medicaid have evolved as well, supporting everything from telehealth to remote monitoring to better reach the people they serve. In the last few months, CMS has taken measures against the largest healthcare fraud schemes in U. S. history, launched reforms to overhaul prior authorization, and invested in tools such as real-time data gathering and reporting to better protect patients and preserve trust in Medicare and Medicaid programs. CMS is acting to reform, strengthen, and safeguard Medicare and Medicaid for the next generations. CMS is driving innovation, improving outcomes, and protecting the integrity of Medicare and Medicaid for the two programs to remain strong for decades to come. CMS invites its partners to work with CMS to drive innovation, eliminate waste, and ensure that Medicare and Medicaid work better for everyone. Sharon Yee has retired from CMS after 42 years of services. She sends her greetings to PABEA and EOA. Darrick introduced Jienelle Herndon from the CMS San Francisco Office of Program Operations and Local Engagement. Jienelle is the State lead for the State of Hawaii as well as the outer Pacific.

Jienelle announced that she is both the Provider Liaison and the Outreach Specialist assigned to the State of Hawaii and the outer Pacific Territories.

### AGENCY REPORTS

Attached are:

- Derrick Ariyoshi's June Report for the City and County of Honolulu Elderly Affairs Division (EAD);
- Hawaii County Office of Aging (HCOA)'s Executive Report for August 2025; and
- Emily's July 2025 Executive Report for the Kauai Agency on Elderly Affairs (KAEA).

Beverly asked the AAAs Executives/representatives to comment on the reactions of their clients, consumers, and participants resulting from the tsunami advisories and alerts and to comment on the implementation of their emergency disaster plans and procedures.

Thomas Atou of EAD reported that, when the advisory was issued, EAD identified the senior centers that were potentially in harm's way. EAD coordinated its efforts with the City and County of Honolulu Department of Emergency Management. Traffic was gridlocked. Preparation was hectic for EAD staff.

Emily reported that she was very satisfied with the way their ADRC and KAEA managed phone calls, especially because the tsunami warning was issued late in the day. KAEA received a directive from the County of Kauai Managing Director to send County employees home.

However, KAEA staff stayed and ensured that every single consumer who lived alone or who is considered high-risk was contacted by KAEA. KAEA ensured that these consumers were aware of the tsunami warning and that they had safe places in which to evacuate. A resident with which KAEA is heavily involved could not transfer her son into his wheelchair. Staff worked together, contacted Kauai Emergency Management Agency (KEMA), and helped the resident. The situation was a good practice scenario. As a result, KAEA is examining its emergency disaster plan to address similar scenarios and other potential scenarios to develop potential improvements to the plan.

Erin reported that it was satisfying to observe that HCOA's emergency disaster plan operated smoothly and effectively. HCOA collaborates with its partners and uses its partners to call its participants. HCOA is the backup (support) to the partners. HCOA staff remained at the ADRC as long as possible, but they eventually had to evacuate. All HCOA partners performed their duties and responsibilities. Phone traffic at the ADRC was at normal levels. HCOA's role was to transfer information from the County to HCOA's partners. As soon as HCOA was aware of which shelters were available, HCOA's transportation partners were informed to transfer kupuna to the closest shelters. Traffic was an issue but became less of an issue as the day and evening progressed. Next week, HCOA will be meeting with its partners to debrief with the new HCOA Executive present. (Today is the new Executive's first day on the job.)

Rowena reported that a large Bingo Blast activity for seniors was held at the Kaunoa Clubhouse in the Lahaina Civic Center Social Hall on the day of the tsunami advisories, but before the advisories were issued. The notifications were helpful for seniors. Seniors received notifications on their phones. Seniors watched television and listened to the radio for current information. MCOA experienced three challenges. One challenge was that MCOA could not extract a report from its WellSky data system listing those seniors who lived alone. A second challenge was the traffic gridlock. The third challenge was that some seniors who were able to evacuate to shelters believed that they (the seniors themselves) were unprepared. Residents might have only minutes to grab necessities. When MCOA performs disaster preparedness education outreach, MCOA informs seniors to have a go-bag ready. MCOA needs a backup plan in the event that its information technology system is unavailable. Seniors need to know their best evacuation routes and the importance of preparing for an emergency and assembling a go-bag before an emergency or disaster occurs.

Rowena commented that surveying residents on their disaster experience might provide insight into improving disaster preparedness. Emergency drills provide an opportunity to identify barriers and challenges to protecting residents. Sometimes, sheltering in place is the safest option.

Beverly requests the AAA Executives include in their reports to PABEA next month any plans by their agencies to survey seniors on their experiences during their tsunami preparations.

Rowena reported that the County of Maui Commission on Persons with Disabilities recently sent to Mayor Bissen a letter with the Commission's recommendations for emergency preparedness. One of the recommendations is to regularly perform countywide emergency preparedness drills or exercises to identify vulnerabilities and potential lack of capacity during an emergency or a disaster. The existing emergency procedures might not be the best. Alternate plans (e.g. "Plan B" and "Plan C") need to be developed.

Emily remarked that each resident's needs in a disaster emergency can be incredibly unique and individualized. Residents need to have a general plan but also need to consider other potential scenarios that might need to be addressed and overcome.

Darrick encourages everyone to have a disaster preparedness plan.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Kupuna Caucus: Friday, August 1, 2025, 2:00 p.m., via Zoom.
- PABEA Monthly Meeting: Wednesday, September 10, 2025, 12:00 p.m.

#### ADJOURNMENT OF PABEA MEETING

Beverly adjourned the meeting at 1:30 p.m.