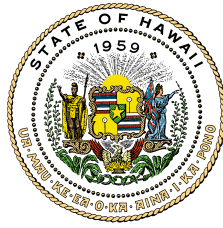


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Policy Advisory Board for Elder Affairs (PABEA)
Legislative Committee Meeting
EOA Large Conference Room (250 S. Hotel St., Suite 406)
And via Zoom

MEETING MINUTES
Friday, December 5, 2025

PABEA Board Members in Attendance: William Kinaka, Stephen Lung, Sara Medeiros, Shelly Ogata, Marilyn Seely, Barbara Service, and Rick Tabor (Chair)

AAA/Community Members/EOA Staff Attendance: Joanne Kealoha, Roberta Murray, Erin Samura, Cristina Valenzuela, Jason Wong (EOA), and Sara Yuan

Absent: Poki'i Balaz, Suzie Schulberg (excused), Gary Simon (excused), Derrick Ariyoshi (excused), Rowena Dagdag-Andaya (excused), Kau'ionalani Fukuda (excused), Charlene Iboshi, Emily Ishida (excused), and Kathy Wyatt

- I. Call to Order
Chair Rick Tabor called the meeting to order at 9:34am and introduced the guest speaker.
- II. Guest Speakers
Representing the Hawai'i Provider Shortage Task Force, Dr. Ka'ohimanu Dang Akiona highlighted critical issues such as prior authorizations, network adequacy, and rural health transformation. She specifically advocated for the Primary Care Protection (PCP) Act, which addresses the rising costs, administrative burdens, and reimbursement challenges threatening community-based clinics on the neighbor islands.

Dr. Akiona emphasized that primary care physicians are vital for disease prevention and resource access, yet neighbor island providers earn one-third less than their mainland counterparts. This disparity—combined with burdensome prior authorization processes—causes staffing shortages and delayed care, disproportionately affecting vulnerable groups like women, Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and older adults. Highlighting a critical burnout

point, she urged members to reach out to legislators to advocate for the PCP Act through personal stories and offered her contact information for further inquiries.

Discussion/Comments:

- William (Bill) asked if providers depend on federal funding. She said that the “majority of providers who accept Medicaid and Medicare are severely impacted by CMS (Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services) reimbursement rates”, which “are not adjusted for cost of living”. She noted that with the federal program cuts (e.g. Medicaid and SNAP) she is seeing the impact on patients (e.g. can’t afford medication/food, flight transportation no longer covered, etc.) and she and her staff must be creative in helping the patient get care and resources. She said that access to primary care on Moloka’i has decreased significantly.
- Sara asked Dr. Akiona to summarize the protections for providers under the PCP Act include:
 - Require 12% primary care spending be paid directly to the treating providers, not to wellness programs or other things.
 - Require prompt pay timelines (e.g. 15 days electronic, 30 days paper) with automatic interest if the payments are delayed.
 - Recognition of urgent and same-day clinics, performing essential primary care (e.g. recognizing that primary care is being offered in different areas and to that primary care providers include physicians, APRNs, and physician assistants {PA}).
 - Inflation index payment updates and no diversion through administrative scoring. Providers are getting reimbursed at a lower rate for visits (e.g. paying providers for a nurse’s visit versus a full physician visit).
 - Require public reporting and enforcement by the insurance commissioner and MedQuest (e.g. asking for payment accountability).
- Marilyn asked how robust the staffing is for nurse practitioners and physician assistants? Dr. Akiona said that on Hawai’i Island the community health center is staffed with a nurse practitioner and a MD (medical doctor), and at the Native Hawaiian Health Center there are two MDs and a nurse practitioner. She noted that there is not enough medical supervision to support the level of care needed, leading to a lack of medical practice oversight. She also highlighted how rural healthcare challenges are exacerbated by misinformation, noting several patients with COVID, who suffered because they had no access to healthcare and had self-medication based on misinformation from family and friends.
- Chair Tabor said that the proposal will be added to PABEA’s legislative agenda being considered in January or February. He requested a draft of the bill and supporting data to facilitate the board's review and testimony efforts.

III. Roll Call was taken about 10am. With 7 board members present there was quorum.

IV. Chair Tabor reviewed the meeting and housekeeping procedures.

Discussion/Comments:

Towards the end of the meeting Barbara noted that she and Roberta had their hands up earlier to motion for a vote, but it wasn't seen or acknowledged by the Chair. She also asked to clarify the requirement for PABEA board members to have their camera on throughout the entirety of the meeting. Chair Tabor confirmed that Sunshine Law for the purposes of quorum requires board members to have their camera on throughout the duration of the meeting, noting community members are not required to have their cameras on.

V. Correction on Expectations for Legislative Committee Members
Chair Tabor corrected his statement at the last meeting (November 7th) regarding expectations for legislative committee members. Chair Tabor clarified that legislative committee members are expected to select and write testimony for bills. He encouraged members to choose a bill/s that they are passionate about and to use the recommended preamble. He reminded members to share their testimony with the committee and noted that those not assigned to specific bills may still submit testimony as individuals.

VI. Review and Approval of Minutes
The draft November 7, 2025 meeting minutes were reviewed. Chair Tabor noted in today's agenda under "Announcements" the RAC meeting scheduled on Thursday, December 4th was postponed, and there was no meeting held that day. There were no comments or objections to the November 7th meeting minutes, and the minutes were approved as is.

VII. Guest Speaker/s
The agenda lists several individuals as suggested speakers. Chair Tabor suggested inviting Coby Chock as guest speaker for the January meeting. He said that Coby was ready to share the Alzheimer's Association's legislative priorities.

Shelly motioned and Sara seconded the motion to approve Coby as guest speaker for the January meeting. Committee members agreed and approved of the motion. There was no opposition to the motion. Representative Lisa Marten (Chair of the Human Services & Homelessness Committee) was proposed as a backup guest speaker should Coby Chock be unavailable.

VIII. Kupuna Caucus (KC) 2026 Legislative Package
KC members voted last month on which 5 legislative proposals to include in the 2026 legislative package, which are introduced by KC Chairs, Senator Moriwaki and Representative Chun. The top 5 proposals will be presented at today's KC meeting. PABEA typically supports these bills.

Discussion/Comments:

- Marilyn noted that legislative proposals not included in the KC package can still be introduced by other legislators. She also mentioned how difficult it is to monitor 100 bills and that having a smaller number of bills to track is preferable.
- Chair Tabor encouraged members to review the top five Kupuna Caucus bills and select any unassigned items to monitor and, if possible, provide testimony.

IX. Review and Discussion of Current and Pending 2026 Houselessness- Related Legislation

Chair Tabor reviewed existing 2025 legislation and funding related to houselessness initiatives, including Act 282 (e.g. extends the Kupuna Rent Supplement Program to June 30, 2028), houselessness initiatives under the State Executive Budget, potential 2026 houselessness-related legislation, and mental health treatment measures (e.g. HB1225 –amends existing statutes to broaden involuntary treatment criteria). He highlighted the intent of HB1225 and noted that it did not pass last year but is concerned the bill will get reintroduced next year. He also discussed mental health care issues affecting older adults and vulnerable populations, noting President Trump’s Executive Order, “Ending Crime and Disorder on America’s Streets,” and the movie, “Francis”. He highlighted the need for adequate care and support systems, while also discussing the challenges faced by mental health professionals due to low pay and high turnover.

Discussion/Comments:

- Sara added that the Kupuna Rent Supplement Program (Act 282) is not just for rent but includes expenses related to housing (e.g. mortgage and tax related costs).
- Cristina said that funding for houselessness initiatives under the State budget mostly focused on transitional housing services, such as the “Ohana Zones”. However, she noted that she did not have information about these programs.
- Sara noted that the term “transitional housing” is expanding, particularly in the counties. She added that on the neighbor island houselessness programs (e.g. shelters) are at full capacity and must be creative in how to provide “transitional” support and resources to houseless population (e.g. providing parking space where houseless can use kitchen and bathroom facilities).
- Sara encouraged using the term “vulnerable” in considering bills/initiatives. She noted that there are many individuals who are “teetering on the edge” of homelessness. Dr. Akiona agreed it would be a strategic use of resources and a medical issue. Chair Tabor concurred, citing his experience with patient mistreatment in managed care to underscore the importance of protecting this population.

X. Priority Issues for Hawai‘i’s Kūpuna and Vulnerable Adults

Chair Tabor reviewed priority areas (listed on the agenda under Section IX) for the upcoming legislative session, such as the high cost of living, healthcare workforce shortage, food insecurity, housing affordability, healthcare access, caregiver support, homelessness, consumer fraud, insurance costs for churches/temples, fireworks, and traffic safety. He noted mental health care issues affecting older adults and vulnerable populations (e.g. loneliness and social isolation are risk factors for depression and suicide). Once the bills are introduced in mid-January, he hopes that the committee can identify PABEA’s legislative priority bills at the February meeting. Given the tight timeline of the legislative session a special meeting may be scheduled.

Discussion/Comments:

- Sara requested to keep discussion of legislative priorities focused on

kupuna, rather than broader issues such as religious institutions (e.g. church/temples insurance costs and fireworks). Chair Tabor noted that church closures impact older adults through lost services but agreed to remove fireworks from the list. He clarified that he is reviewing the broad spectrum of kupuna issues with the intent to narrow down the list once committee members, particularly the newer members, determining which bills they will champion.

- Long-Term Care Ombudsman, John McDermott, asked to discuss proposed legislation related to foster care homes and individuals with intellectual disabilities and/or developmental disabilities. The issue was not listed on the agenda, and Chair Tabor advised him to email the details for inclusion on the next meeting's agenda.
- Cristina suggested inviting Che Silvert, Legislative Coordinator, to the Council on Developmental Disabilities. She said that they can provide more information about their legislative priorities and noted that several proposals may also impact older adults. The committee agreed to have two speakers for the January meeting.

XI. Preamble for PABEA Testimony

Rick pointed out the required preamble (listed on the agenda) for legislative testimonies submitted on behalf of PABEA.

XII. Suggested Agenda Items for the Next Meeting

No discussion.

XIII. New Business: January Meeting Date

The committee agreed to schedule the next meeting for January 9th.

XIV. Announcements

Towards the end of the meeting there were technical difficulties hearing attendees on Zoom. The issue was resolved in about 5 minutes.

1. Cristina shared a request from EOA Director, Caroline Cadirao. Caroline requested PABEA support EOA, during this challenging fiscal environment, by focusing official PABEA testimony to support the agency's current positions and projects. She further explained that for this legislative session the Administration has asked all departments to limit the type of bills proposed, except for bills that were critical for services or related to emergency/disaster preparedness. All departments were limited to a total of 100 bills under the Administration's legislative package. Department of Health was allocated 12 bills. The Administration recommended that agencies focus on moving forward current programs and initiatives. Additionally, EOA is currently struggling with vacant positions and existing projects, so they will respectfully oppose or limit comments on any new bills that require EOA to take the lead.
2. PABEA Meeting is scheduled for Friday, December 5th at 12pm. Hybrid meeting will be held in person in the EOA Large Conference Room 406 and remotely via Zoom.

3. Kupuna Caucus meeting scheduled for Friday, December 5th at 2pm via Zoom. The top 5 bill proposals selected for the Kupuna Caucus package will be announced at the meeting.

The next PABEA Legislative Committee meeting is scheduled for **Friday, January 9th from 9:30-11am**. Meetings are held in-person in the EOA Large Conference Room 406 and remotely via Zoom.

Meeting adjourned at 11:04 A.M.

Respectfully submitted by Cristina Valenzuela