

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, March 6, 2026 | 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: Poki'i Balaz, Beverly Gotelli, Louise Johnson, William Kinaka, 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: Stephen Lung and Suzie Schulberg.

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

Ex-officio members present: Alan Burdick, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations Office of Community Services (DLIR OCS); Paula Cerio, Department of Health; Jienelle Herndon, San Francisco Office of Program Operations and Local Engagement, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Service; Kathy Ishihara, Department of Human Services; and Ryan Mandado, Department of Education.

Executive Office on Aging (EOA) staff and Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) staff present: Candice Bryant, Caroline Cadirao, Rowena Dagdag-Andaya, Josephine Lum, Deborah Niyongabo, Tani Salazar, Cristina Valenzuela, and Jason Wong.

Guests present: Cori Kekina, Med-QUEST Division, Department of Human Services; Elaine Lee, Med-QUEST Division, Department of Human Services; Curtis Pruder, Department of Health; Audrey Suga-Nakagawa, Director of Advocacy, AARP Hawaii; and Priscilla Thode, Department of Human Services.

PRESENTATION: Elaine Lee, Med-QUEST Division, Department of Human Services, provided a presentation on Dual Eligible Special Needs Plan (D-SNP). (Presentation attached)

Dual Medicare/Medicaid eligible beneficiaries who need to reenroll, change their coverage, or combine their Medicare and Medicaid benefits into one coordinated plan, or who have questions can call D-SNP or 1-800-MEDICARE.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Approval of the draft minutes of the February 6, 2026 in-person and Zoom PABEA meeting was deferred to the April PABEA meeting pending clarification.

EOA DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Update on Federal Funding Amounts for Aging Network Programs

Caroline reported that Federal funding for the Older Americans Act (OAA) has passed. Funding for OAA Title IIIB Supportive Services has increased. Funding for OAA Title III E National Family Caregiver Support Program has increased slightly. All other funding remains at 2024 levels despite increased costs of providing services. Funding for Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP), State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), and OAA Title VII services remain at 2024 levels. The OAA has bipartisan support.

Update on the EOA and the Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) Planning Process for the Next State and Area Plans for 2027 - 2031

Caroline reported that EOA and the AAAs are beginning the 2027 – 2031 planning process. EOA and the Counties are partnering in the process, beginning with EOA's needs assessment. Working with the planners in each of the Counties and with Jason Wong (EOA Statistician), EOA will be developing the needs assessments for distribution in Hawaii's communities, including a needs assessment of older adults and a needs assessment of caregivers to identify gaps in fulfilling the needs of older adults and the needs of caregivers. EOA will perform a broad outreach to all service providers and stakeholders in the community to determine challenges and barriers that providers and stakeholders are encountering. EOA's approach and strategies will align with plan goals. EOA does not have a planner yet. Caroline will remind AAAs to enlist their Committees/Councils on Aging as resources. Maui County Office on Aging (MCOA) and Kauai Agency on Elderly Affairs (KAEA) are on par with expenditures and have expanded their services. Hawaii County Office of Aging (HCOA) has a shortage of providers. The City and County of Honolulu Elderly Affairs Division also has a shortage of providers. Vacant EOA positions might not be funded in the next budget. Caroline is examining filling vacant EOA positions with 89-day hires. For budgetary purposes, positions occupied by 89-day hires will be considered filled positions.

Summary of SHIP/SMP Volunteer Recognition Event on March 6, 2026

Caroline reported that she and Beverly attended today's SHIP/SMP Volunteer Recognition Event this morning. Stephen Lung is at the event. Today's event is the first in-person volunteer recognition event since the COVID pandemic. The theme of the event is a wave progressing forward. Attendees learned about types of scams. They also learned that most programs, services, and support, including Social Security, require online access and online accounts. Social Security can be accessed with a Login.gov account or an ID.me account. Medicare can be accessed with a Login.gov account, ID.me account, or a Medicare.gov account. Signing into Social Security and Medicare require two-factor authentication. The Better Business Bureau provided an informative presentation at the event. Caroline suggests that the Better Business Bureau provide the presentation at a future PABEA meeting. Next month, Caroline will provide an update and status report on the Hawaii Dementia Initiative.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Beverly reported that she and Caroline attended the SHIP/SMP Volunteer Recognition Event this morning. SHIP and SMP have five volunteers who have been volunteering for more than fifteen years. A volunteer was at the event who is in his first year of volunteering. The average length of volunteer service is seven to eight years. SHIP and SMP are recruiting for volunteers.

SHIP is the best unbiased resource for information. Beverly has been in contact with Caroline regarding various issues and how to proceed. They also discussed upcoming vacancies on PABEA. Rick is at the Capitol for his confirmation hearing. Raylene has been notified that she will receive a confirmation hearing. Others have applied but have not received a response from Boards and Commissions yet. Stephen Lung applied last year. Beverly is a holdover until June 2026.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Gary reported that the Committee met this morning and reviewed PABEA priority bills and other aging/disability bills:

- HB 1972 HD 2/SB 2863 Caregiver Tax Credit. HB 1972 HD 2 passed the House Committee on Finance and will cross over to Senate. The Senate bill died.
- HB 1974 HD 1/SB 2865 Hearing Loss State Plan. HB 1974 HD 1 passed the House Committee on Finance and will cross over to Senate. The Senate bill died.
- HB 1975 HD 1/SB 2866 SD 1 Kupuna Rent Supplement Program. HB 1975 HD 1 passed the House Committee on Finance and will cross over to Senate. SB 2866 passed the Senate Committee on Ways and Means and will cross over to the House.
- HB 1976 HD 1/SB 2867 First Responder Dementia Training. HB1976 HD 1 passed the House Committee on Finance and will cross over to Senate. The Senate bill died.
- HB 2003/SB 2387 limits cryptocurrency kiosk transactions to \$2,000 per day and \$10,000 in 30 days. The House bill died. SB 2387 passed the Senate Committee on Ways and Means and will cross over to the House.
- HB 1804/SB 2554 Long-Term Care Financing. HB 1804 passed the House Committee on Finance and will cross over to Senate. The Senate bill died.
Audrey reported that HB 1642, introduced by Representative Scot Matayoshi, prohibits cryptocurrency kiosks that accept United States currency from a customer in exchange for cryptocurrency. HB 1642 HD 1 passed the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs and will cross over to the Senate. AARP Hawaii is supporting both HB 1642 and SB 2387.

Gary reported that the Committee approved recommending HB 1965 HD 1 relating to primary care and SB 2557 relating to homelessness to PABEA for PABEA to support:

- HB 1965 HD 1 Primary Care Providers Working Group: Establishes the Primary Care Providers Working Group within the State Health Planning and Development Agency to address issues relating to, and develop recommendations for the stabilization of, primary care services in Hawai'i. Requires the Working Group to make a report to the Legislature. Sunsets the Working Group on 6/30/2027. Effective 7/1/3000.
HB 1965 HD 1 passed the House Committee on Finance and will cross over to the Senate.
- SB 2557 Relating to Homelessness: Requires the Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions to make an annual report on the number of sheltered and unsheltered homeless individuals and on housing placement. Requires the Statewide Office on

Homelessness and Housing Solutions to annually report to the Legislature on contracts and plans or proposals to enhance kauhale projects. Requires the Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions to annually report to the Legislature on coordination between the office and any county, state, or federal agencies, or private or nonprofit organizations.

SB 2557 passed the Senate Committee on Ways and Means and will cross over to the House.

A motion to approve including HB 1965 HD 1 and SB 2557 as 2026 PABEA legislative priorities was moved and adopted by the PABEA members present in-person and attending via Zoom.

Gary announced that Sara will be the PABEA lead for HD 1965 HD 1 and SB 2557.

Gary also announced that the next Legislative Committee meeting is scheduled for Friday, April 10, 2026 at 9:30 a.m.

PLANS AND PROJECTS REVIEW COMMITTEE (PPRC)

Lisa thanked the AAAs for their reports and work. PPRC asks the AAAs to include in their reports difficulties that the AAAs are encountering, such as staffing problems and shortages, financial challenges, or provider shortages. These difficulties might be the causes for incomplete AAA activities or unmet plan goals.

RECOGNITION AND AWARDS COMMITTEE (RAC)

Beverly reported that the Committee met on Thursday, March 5, 2026. The Older Americans Month (OAM) 2026 Theme is *Champion Your Health*. The OAM celebration will be on June 12, 2026 at 15 Craigside. Registration will begin at 10:30 a.m. Lunch will be served at 11:00 a.m. The Lanakila Multipurpose Senior Center *Happy Serenaders* will provide entertainment. James Dela Cruz will chant oli. The Committee discussed smaller poster photographs of the honorees for easier transport and inter-island air transport. The Committee also discussed whether a photographer is needed and whether photos from the past were used for any purpose. Caroline and an intern will be developing the program book. Beverly sent a request to the Governor's Office for the Governor's attendance at the celebration. Beverly also invited the First Lady. Rick will invite the Lieutenant Governor. Beverly will work with Caroline on composing the text for the Governor's proclamation. The lunch menu is short ribs with wine sauce, mashed potatoes, vegetables, and dessert. The program will conclude by 1:30 p.m. At the May meeting, a sign-up sheet will be circulated for tasks that need to be managed at the celebration. The Committee is examining alternative keepsakes to the medallions for the honorees which might be more useful to the honorees. Flower leis will be presented to only the eight honorees. The next RAC meeting is scheduled for April 9, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. via Zoom.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

No further unfinished business was presented.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business was introduced.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

No public testimony was offered.

APPOINTED MEMBERS REPORTS

No appointed members' reports were offered.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS' REPORTS

Kathy Ishihara reported that Ohana Medicaid's parent company, Centene, has decided not to renew its Hawaii Medicaid Quest Integration (QI) contract. The contract expires December 31, 2026. Centene, DHS, Med-QUEST, and Medicaid met with the Governor. All are working on transition plans. OHANA members will be able to select another QI plan on or before December 31st, 2026. The current QI plans are Aloha Care, HMSA, Kaiser, and United Healthcare.

Attached is Alan Burdick's email report. Alan reported that the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) served 7,510 participants last year. This coming year, the program is limited to serving 7,127 participants, a decrease of 383 participants, unless additional funding is provided later in the year. Participants are provided \$50 worth of coupons. \$50 purchases less food at the market each year. Hawaii Foodbank on Oahu and Kauai, Maui Economic Opportunity on Maui, and Hawaii County Economic Opportunity (HCEOC) continue to provide SFMNP services at a financial loss. However, the program is valuable to both its elder participants and to local farmers. Few farmers make money from SFMNP. Most are small farmers. The farmers are supportive of the program because it helps them to sell their produce. DLIR OCS also administers The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) which provides low-income Americans, including elderly people, with emergency food and nutrition assistance at no cost. To be eligible for TEFAP, applicants must have a total gross income no greater than 300% of the poverty level.

Jienelle Herndon announced that Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a handout for a new temporary Special Election Period (SEP). Some provider information might have been incorrect on the Medicare Plan Finder for 2026. The SEP is available in 2026 to make sure beneficiaries change their plan if they enrolled based on inaccurate provider information. Jienelle will email the handout to PABEA members. The CMS Newsroom has a fact sheet on *Medicare.gov Enhanced Log In*. Medicare beneficiaries can sign into their Medicare accounts with ID.me, Clear, or Login.gov. For now, Medicare beneficiaries also can use their Medicare.gov sign-in. Jienelle will email the fact sheet on the Medicare.gov enhanced login to PABEA members. Jienelle offered to assist with arranging a presentation to PABEA on the various login options. CMS Region 9 offers a new monthly webinar series, *CMS Current*, directed to beneficiaries and consumers. The goal of the series is to provide brief, useful information. The length of the webinar is thirty minutes. For the next three months, the webinar is an introduction to Medicare, *Medicare 101*, e.g. enrollment, etc. After May 2026, other speakers and other topics will be offered. In June 2026, CMS will collaborate with Social Security and discuss areas that Social Security handles versus what CMS handles and which agency to contact for different issues. Feedback from webinar attendees will determine topics to be presented in the future. Jienelle will email the flyer for this month's webinar to PABEA members.

AGENCY REPORTS

Beverly reported that Caroline and the AAA Executives are meeting at this moment to strategize for the launch of the new computer system scheduled for next week. The computer system will

be down for approximately a week during the transition. The AAA Executives from Hawaii County, the City and County of Honolulu, and Kauai County will be attending the Aging Policy Briefing and Capitol Hill Day hosted by USAging from March 16 to March 17, 2026 in Washington, D.C. They will meet with Representative Ed Case and Senator Brian Schatz. Beverly asked PABEA members who have questions about the reports from the AAA Executives to email the AAA Executives.

Hawaii County Office of Aging

Attached is Ka'u'ionalani's February 2026 HCOA Report.

Kauai Agency on Elderly Affairs

Attached is Emily's February 2026 KAEA Executive Report.

Maui County Office on Aging

Attached is Rowena's March 2026 MCOA Report.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- PABEA Monthly Meeting: Friday, April 10, 2026, 12:00 p.m.
- Kupuna Caucus Meeting Friday, March 6, 2026, 2:00 p.m. via Zoom. The agenda includes a Medicaid update from Federal and State perspectives and an update on the Kupuna Caucus Legislative Package.

ADJOURNMENT OF PABEA MEETING

Beverly adjourned the meeting at 1:13 p.m.