

Hawaii Caregiver Coalition: Creating a Voice for Family Caregivers in Social Policy

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Who Are Hawaii's Family Caregivers?

- ◆ Gradual vs. Quick Roles
- ◆ 80% of care is provided by unpaid family caregivers. In Hawaii, approximately 192,390 individuals provide unpaid assistance to older family members.
- ◆ A 1997 study estimated 114,872 family caregivers in Hawai'i provided 106 million hours of care, valued at \$874.6 million per year.
- ◆ Overall, persons in different demographic groups and with different socioeconomic characteristics exhibit a remarkably similar likelihood of being caregivers.


Why Has Public Support for Family Caregivers Been Slow to Develop?

- ◆ Lawmakers and the public continue to cling to traditional assumptions about family care as a strictly private matter (Asian culture).
 - ◆ Family caregivers are a politically marginalized group and have no voice in the political process.
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Political Marginalization

- ◆ Caregivers are fully engaged with their private responsibilities to provide care.
- ◆ Caregivers typically have no experience with the political process
- ◆ Lawmakers who have advocated for increased supports are typically those with personal experiences in family caregiving.
- ◆ Goal: To shift the long-term care spotlight to **FAMILY CAREGIVERS.**

Purpose of the Presentation

- ◆ Describe the Hawaii Caregiver Coalition (HCC).
 - ◆ Summarize the HCC's activities and accomplishments for the first year.
 - ◆ Describe what the HCC is currently pursuing for the current Legislative session.
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Mission Statement

“As caregiving touches everyone, the mission of the Hawaii Caregiver Coalition is to improve the quality of life of those who give and receive care by increasing community awareness of caregivers issues through continuing advocacy, education and outreach.”

First Year Activities: Political Advocacy

1. Coalition members visited each legislator's office to deliver a letter introducing the Coalition and encouraging dialogue regarding proposals for family caregiver supports.
2. Members recorded individual communications with legislators on a form in order to create a record of such contacts.
3. The HCC facilitator regularly informed members by email of each step of pending legislation and how they could provide testimony in the legislative process.

First Year Activities: Political Advocacy (Continued)

4. Five groups of caregivers from caregiver support groups went on “walk-throughs” to meet with legislators and tell their stories.
5. A “Thank You” reception was held the day after adjournment, where individual legislators were recognized and 2 caregivers related their stories and the challenges they face. The reception also was a positive social event for members of Coalition.

Accomplishments of the First Year

- ◆ The Coalition broadened awareness and support for caregiver issues in the legislature by providing a “face” to the issues and keeping the issues in the spotlight.
- ◆ One bill passed, granting rights to grandparents raising children to access needed health care for the children.
- ◆ Major proposals take more than one year of advocacy; several were close to passage and have a positive outlook for the current session.

Accomplishments of the First Year (Continued)

- ◆ Resolutions were adopted establishing a commitment by the State to support family caregivers and to direct the Departments of Health and Human Services to develop methods of supporting family caregivers.
- ◆ Other measures passed such as additional funding for chore services and senior centers, and funds to pursue innovative ideas to enable individuals to “age in place” in the community.

Second Year Activities: Political Advocacy

1. Developed a brochure about the HCC.
2. Developed a fact sheet, "Who Are the Caregivers in Hawaii."
3. Developed an educational series, "Public Policy Principles for Change" in 5 areas: Training & Education; Respite Services; Financial Incentives; Balancing Work & Caregiving; Coordinated Services & Policies.

Second Year Activities: Political Advocacy (Continued)

4. Hosted “Holo Imua Kakou” (Moving Forward Together) reception at the Capitol a day before the opening of the Legislature, to showcase families who provide care to their elderly relatives, loved ones with dementia, and grandparents raising grandchildren.
5. Teaming with the Policy Advisory Board for Elder Affairs (PABEA) to visit Legislators.
6. Communication with the Department of Human Services to ensure that families receive information about financial/adoption assistance.

Accomplishments of the Second Year

- ◆ 2005 Hawaii Silver Legislature.
- ◆ Family caregiving issue is a legislative priority for PABEA, Hawaii Alliance for Retired Americans, Hawaii State Teachers Association – Retired, Faith Action in Community Equity, the ILWU, and Kokua Council.
- ◆ Proposal for training & education in the Executive Supplemental Budget.

Thank you for the Opportunity to Speak with you Today!

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