

Edward Kawamura, Member, Veterans Advisory Council

EDWARD KAWAMURA
Kapaa, HI

TESTIMONY: SENATE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS.

TO: Senator Craig, Ranking Member, Senator Akaka, and members of this hearing.

My name is Edward M. Kawamura. I am a Vietnam Veteran who retired from the U.S. Army in 1978. I have been involved with veterans and families as Department of Hawaii, Disabled American Veteran Commander, Kauai Veteran's Council President, Board Member Office of Veterans Services, and current Board member to the VA Advisory Board.

The services that are provided by our VA are ?number one.? The personnel at the Kauai Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) are the best. Their professionalism, dedication, and willingness to help, make them the best. Their rating by JACCO reflects their number one rating. I applaud all the workers involved at the CBOC and VET Center.

There are some improvements and visions that I would like to share as improvements and new programs for Kauai Veterans. They are as follows:

- a. Manpower: More manpower is needed. A Home Healthcare Nurse is needed. Our aging population, coupled with problems of getting veterans to the medical clinic, mandates the need to provide the care and services at the homes. This nurse would help in reducing time now serviced by our doctor and nurse practitioner so more veterans can be served and reduce scheduling time for appointments.. Outreach programs are needed, and can be accomplished with more manpower. Increased manpower and services are needed also due to the increased veteran population returning from the Iraqi War.
- b. Facility: The CBOC has outgrown itself. The size and space for the waiting room, screening rooms, prescription vault and conference rooms needs to be increased. Parking is another area that needs to be increased. Recommendation: A new CBOC be constructed at the Kauai Veterans Center site. Parking is adequate and space is available for new building. This would make for a ?One-Stop? veterans operation.
- c. Funding: More funds should be made available for travel as our VA has a huge geographic area to cover. All of these travels must be by air. Care servers, care givers, and patients are often required to travel to provide or receive services.
- d. Kauai Veterans Cemetery: Phase I expansion by the VA doubled the size of the cemetery. They did not provide for increase in manpower or equipment. This should be a factor included in future plans.
- e. Vision: The vision is that there should be an Old Soldiers Home of the Pacific here on Kauai. The aged veterans who have nowhere to go should be afforded a place to live out their lives. This is so we can accommodate the Pacific Rim veterans to provide for an environment similar to their lifestyles. The site location at Sam Mahelona Hospital has the ideal view and environmental elements for a good soldier's home.
The Spark M. Matsunaga Medical Center is a perfect example that reflects the dedication by our congressional and your committee to our fellow veterans. This facility is ?number one.?

I would like to thank each and everyone on your committee for taking time to hear our concerns. This is truly the only way to hear first hand the needs of our fellow veterans and their families. Thank you very much.