

PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT: HAWAI'I ISLAND ADULT CARE

Talk Story with Brenda Ho &
Andrea Wernli



In East Hawai'i, our roots run deep with aloha, connection, and kuleana to care for one another. That's why partnerships like the one between Hawai'i Care Choices (HCC) and Hawai'i Island Adult Care (HIAC) mean so much to our community. In this talk story session, Our CEO Brenda Ho and HIAC Executive Director Andrea Wernli sat down to share what makes their collaboration so powerful, and why this kind of support is essential for our kūpuna and their caregivers.

Brenda Ho: So what type of individual typically comes to the adult daycare? Like my mom is 89—what's the reason most folks show up?

Andrea Wernli: That's a good question. There's quite a few different reasons. A lot of people come to make friends and socialize so they're not home by themselves or just isolated. And it helps caregivers too—they get a break, run errands, or go to work knowing their loved one is safe, engaged, and doing purposeful activities.

Brenda: That social connection is so important.

Andrea: Absolutely. We go on excursions and just try to make the day fun. Our staff really makes each day special—they do such a great job making the program meaningful.

Brenda: And you provide medication management while folks are here?

Andrea: Yep! We have an Registered Nurse and a care manager, so we can provide that kind of support too.

Brenda: That must be such a relief to families

Andrea: For sure. Sometimes families aren't comfortable with their loved one being home alone anymore. We can be that safe place where they're not alone.

Brenda: I heard your license allows you to serve over 100 people?

Andrea: We can serve up to 105 a day, but it depends on staffing. Right now we have about 84 enrolled and see 55 to 60 participants a day. We have the space—it's a beautiful building—but we need more team members to serve more people.

Brenda: So true—we're all facing workforce challenges. We need more young people to get into caregiving careers. It's hard work but so rewarding.

Andrea: Definitely. And I love that our missions align. What you folks are doing with your care home is amazing. Just like us, you offer short-term stays so caregivers can take a break—even just a week or two. That can make a huge difference.

Brenda: Yeah, some folks just need a little time to breathe. And people still get their own space, but also join group activities, make friendships. That's a big part of what we're both offering—community.



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This partnership between Hawai'i Care Choices and Hawai'i Island Adult Care provides a strong circle of support for East Hawai'i's kūpuna and their caregivers.

Hawai'i Island Adult Care offers daytime connection, purposeful fun, caregiver respite, and even medication support—creating a safe and engaging space where people can make friends and thrive.

Meanwhile, Pōhai Mālama Care Home extends that support into short-term and long-term residential care, giving families trusted options that honor dignity. Whether it's for three days up to three weeks, short-term stays are available and can make all the difference to a caregiver seeking a safe, nurturing environment of aloha for their loved one, while they are away.

Together, these services offer a seamless circle of care rooted in compassion, connection, and cultural values. From a day of laughter to a few weeks of rest, or a place to call home long-term, our kūpuna and their caregivers have options that honor their needs.

With aloha,
The Hawai'i Care Choices 'Ohana
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