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**Discovering A World of Possibilities: The 24th Annual Day at the
Capitol with the State Council on Developmental Disabilities and the
Alzheimer's Association**

Celebrating Inclusivity, Belonging and Advocacy Through Legislative Engagement

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 22, 2024

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i State Council on Developmental Disabilities, a prominent advocacy group for individuals with developmental disabilities, in partnership with the Alzheimer's Association, is proud to announce its Annual Hawai'i Advocacy Day to take place on Thursday, March 7, 2024 from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Hawai'i State Capitol. Themed "A World of Possibilities," this unique gathering is dedicated to fostering inclusivity, belonging, empowering voices, and promoting awareness about the rights and need of individuals with developmental disabilities, and Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Those with an intellectual and/or developmental disability, Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, advocates, family and friends are invited to attend.

This day serves as a cornerstone in the mission to create an avenue for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and Alzheimer's disease and other

dementias to engage directly in the legislative process. Attendees will actively participate in meetings with lawmakers, observe legislative sessions and contribute to discussions on policies that impact their lives.

“The theme “A World of Possibilities” encapsulates the vision of creating a future where individuals of all abilities have limitless opportunities and the potential to shape their destinies,” said Daintry Bartoldus, executive administrator of the State Council of Developmental Disabilities. “We envision a world where individuals with developmental disabilities are not limited by societal barriers, but instead are empowered to explore a multitude of possibilities. The annual Day at the Capitol is a celebration of that vision and an invitation to create a more inclusive and accessible world,” she added.

Approximately 23,000 individuals in Hawai‘i have a developmental disability. According to the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act, a developmental disability is defined as a severe chronic, mental or physical impairment that restricts the ability to function and requires support services. Examples include Down syndrome, cerebral palsy and autism.

“We must amplify our efforts to raise awareness about Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia, as they affect nearly 100,000 individuals in our state, and improve the quality and access to care for our residents,” said LJ Duenas, Executive Director of the Alzheimer's Association. “To do so, it is crucial to develop supportive policies for those living with Alzheimer's and their caregivers. This can be achieved by actively participating in the lawmaking process and mobilizing advocates to speak up and make a difference. Events like Hawai‘i Advocacy Day at the Capitol play a vital role in these initiatives, and we are thankful to partner with the council on this important day of advocacy, belonging, and community engagement.”

The annual Day at the Capitol is made possible through the collaborative efforts led by the Hawai‘i State Council on Developmental Disabilities in partnership with entities such as the Department of Health Developmental Disabilities Division, Department of Health Family Health Services Division, the University of Hawai‘i Center on Disability Studies, Hawai‘i Disability Rights Center, Hawai‘i Self Advocacy Advisory Council, Disability and Communication Access Board, Special Parent and Information Network, Office of Language Access, the Hilopa‘a Family to Family Health Information Center, Maternal and Child Health Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities Program, Department of Human Services Med-Quest Division, Office of Elections, Department of Education Community Children’s Council and the Hawai‘i State Department of Education Monitoring and Compliance Branch.

The council and Alzheimer's Association warmly invites individuals with developmental disabilities, Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, their families and friends, and interested advocates to join us at the upcoming 24th Day at the Capitol. A strong presence is crucial to amplifying our collective voice. Community members are asked to please register and confirm attendance through the following Eventbrite link to actively contribute to this impactful initiative.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2024-day-at-the-capitol-tickets-801820014247>

Lunch will be offered to registered attendees.

For further information or inquiries, feel free to contact us at 808-586-8100 or via email at hiscdd@doh.hawaii.gov.

About the Hawai'i State Council on Developmental Disabilities:

The function of the council is to provide advocacy, quality assurance, capacity building, and systems change activities on behalf of persons with developmental disabilities. The DD Council consists of 28 Governor-appointed members that includes individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD), parents, family members, and representatives from public and private agencies that serve this population. At least 61% of the council (17 members) must be a person with I/DD or a family member of a person with I/DD. View the DD Council Fact Sheet for more information.

About the Alzheimer's Association ®:

The Alzheimer's Association leads the way to end Alzheimer's and all other dementia — by accelerating global research, driving risk reduction and early detection, and maximizing quality care and support. Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's and all other dementia ®. For more information, visit alz.org or call the 24/7 Helpline at 800-272-3900.

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