

Rotary Club of Honolulu

July 21, 2026 Inspiration by Rick Tabor

Last Tuesday, I joined friends from Rotary and Alzheimer's Association, Calvin Hara and Dr. Poki'i Balaz at a kūpuna bill signing celebration. Governor Josh Green signed the historic Hanai Memory Network bill into law, investing \$3 million into the enhancement of dementia assessment, care, and support clinics across Hawaii.

On the same day "Miracle on the Hudson" hero Captain Sully Sullenberger courageously shared his early-stage Alzheimer's diagnosis, I shared a cup of java and some angel food cake to mark a major milestone in the fight against this disease. From stigma to courage, we are shifting toward better education, renewed hope, and accessible support.

For ten years, I have proudly volunteered with Calvin and Poki'i at the Alzheimer's Association, Aloha Chapter. This mission is deeply personal. My family spent twenty years watching our mother brave the slow erasure of her beautiful mind. Despite my background in mental health and caregiving, nothing truly prepared me for the heavy toll this disease took on our entire family.

As I continue to advocate in our community, I'm seeing both the medical and legislative landscapes evolve. Science has made revolutionary breakthroughs: we now have highly accurate blood tests that can detect dementia years before symptoms appear, alongside FDA-approved, disease-modifying medications that actively slow cognitive decline.

Hawaii's Hanai Memory Networks plan is to provide dementia specialists and supportive care workers island wide. We are building a future where no individual or family has to face an Alzheimer's diagnosis alone. And someday soon, with continued support for scientific studies, there will be a cure for Alzheimer's related issues.

As Captain Sully said regarding his own diagnosis, "Though it may impact my memory of the past, this diagnosis will not prevent me from looking forward to and appreciating the future."

Thank you for your time and support.

Great seeing you all! Bon Appetite!

Enjoy the meeting.