

**Seniors have special legal needs, and it's important to find a lawyer who has experience in dealing with those needs.**

\* You may be on Medicare and/or Medicaid, or in the future may apply for those programs;

\* You may be on a fixed income;

\* You may have a spouse and/or child(ren) who have different legal goals.

Whatever your legal needs are, when you shop for a private lawyer, you should be prepared to ask questions to be sure that you:

- (1) hire the right lawyer for you, and*
- (2) know how the lawyer will be charging you (for example, if the*

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This brochure was created through a grant from the Administration on Aging, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201.

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Legal advice should be sought to determine if the matters in this brochure are applicable to the user's specific case, and also whether the law has changed since the publication of these materials.

**Legal Aid Society  
of  
Hawai'i's  
SENIOR  
LEGAL  
HOTLINE**

# **What Seniors Should Ask Before Hiring a Lawyer**

*Questions You Should  
Ask to Make Sure You  
Are Hiring The Right  
Lawyer.*

*lawyer will charge a “flat fee” or charge by the hour.*

### **Rule Number One**

You are a customer buying a service. You have the right to shop around for the best service.

In order to find out which lawyer is best for you, call at least three lawyers.

Don't feel pressured to commit to a lawyer until you have spoken to several lawyers, and have taken the time to decide which one you feel most comfortable working with and whom you can afford.

Ask your lawyer to explain any part of your case that you do not understand.

### **Rule Number Two**

You want a lawyer who has experience in dealing with your type of legal problem.

\* How long have you been licensed to practice law?

\* Has anyone filed any complaints against you?

*(You can call the state Office of Disciplinary Counsel at 521-4591 to verify this information)*

### **Rule Number Three**

You want a lawyer who is familiar with senior legal needs. To find this out, ask the lawyer:

\* How many elder clients have you served?

\* Have you ever helped someone protect their assets for Medicaid purposes?

\* Are you familiar with the Medicare and Medicaid regulations regarding assets and income?

### **Rule Number Four**

Find out what the cost will be.

\* What are your fees? If you charge by the hour, how long do you think it will take to complete my job?

\* any costs, such as photocopying and faxes? If so, what do they usually run for a job like this?

\* Is there anything I can do to keep the costs down?

### **Rule Number Five**

Beware of unethical requests.

\* A lawyer should not appoint herself as your trustee, personal representative or attorney for your estate after your death.

\* A lawyer should not ask you to transfer your assets to her or him.

To find this out, ask the lawyer:

\* How many cases like mine  
have you handled?