



**Kenneth Zeri, 52**

**President, Hospice Hawaii**

Before Ken Zeri took over at Hospice Hawaii six years ago, there were fears the nonprofit would not survive. Zeri, a former Navy officer, streamlined costs, fine-tuned operations and built a new corporate culture, based on accountability and a shared vision to provide the best care to end-of-life patients. Staff morale improved, which also helped improve care to the more than 700 patients Hospice serves every year.



“Ken is super high-energy and he’s such a visionary,” says Rachael Wong, executive director of the Hawaii Consortium for Integrative Healthcare. “He’s done tremendous things to grow and improve Hospice Hawaii, but I think his work on the policy side will have a much broader impact on the community.”

Photo: Mark Arbeit

In 2009, Zeri spearheaded the campaign that persuaded the state Legislature to pass a law covering Physician Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment. The program, part of a national movement, is designed to improve the end-of-life care people receive and to ensure that physicians honor a patient’s treatment wishes. Zeri continues to be active in Kokua Mau, the state’s palliative care organization, and has consistently led the local movement to redefine what is the best end-of-life care.

“Home care, not ICU care, in my opinion, is the best option for most people, and we can help make that happen,” Zeri says. “I like to think that our organization provides more options for local families and shows that end of life can be filled with dignity and happiness.”

–SE