March 22, 2020

The Honorable Governor David Y. Ige
Hawai‘i State Capitol
415 South Beretania St
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Governor Ige,

Hawai‘i faces an unprecedented challenge with COVID-19. The actions you have taken thus far are not enough. Your slow response will cost lives. The people of Hawai‘i deserve a proactive approach to protect public health.

We represent the state’s doctors, nurses, public health professionals, health care systems, social service agencies, and community service organizations. We stand united in asking you to exercise your authority to issue an emergency proclamation/executive order to address the imminent public health threat of COVID-19.

We stand ready to assist you and all levels of government to help resolve this crisis. Specifically, we echo the March 22 letter signed by 68 Legislators and recommend the following critical, time-sensitive actions to ensure absolute protection for our residents:

1. **We must institute an immediate statewide shutdown for at least the next 15 days - this may need to be extended.**
   - Order all residents and visitors to shelter in place
   - Close non-essential businesses
   - Prohibit all non-essential inter-island and out-of-state travel
   - Mahalo to Mayor Caldwell, Mayor Kawakami, and Mayor Victorino for stepping up and taking decisive action to protect families on O‘ahu, Kauai, and Maui County. For the sake of all our residents, and to eliminate confusion, we need an immediate statewide order as well.

2. **We must increase provider capacity, expand access to testing, and establish alternative sites of care.**
   - Guarantee an adequate, continuous supply of critical supplies needed such as personal protective equipment (PPE) for primary care providers, equipment for testing and respiratory support.
   - Waive the requirement that primary care physician (PCP) orders are necessary to receive any kind of COVID-19 test such that testing can be expanded without overwhelming our providers. Allow health administrators to use their own discretion to allow individuals without health insurance or access to a PCP to get tested.
   - Testing sites need to be able to 1) assess clinically, 2) conduct the test, and 3) provide this service without charge to the patient.
- Make use of existing facilities, creating temporary treatment units as needed, such as in hotels, government property, vacant UH dorms, to immediately increase patient beds and provide isolation to positive COVID-19 patients.

3. **We must expand the functions of the Joint Incident Center under HIEMA Adjutant General Kenneth Hara and ensure that health care experts are at the table leading the response.**
   - Include representatives from state and county agencies and community organizations who can help accelerate emergency planning, streamline government response, prioritize public safety, and mobilize resources across all islands. Public health and health care must also be represented in each county’s emergency operations center.
   - Communications Coordination - improve and increase official communication to the public as well as the health and human services sector.

4. **We must ensure the protection of all workers from the impact of COVID-19.**
   - Require all health plans to continue to provide health coverage for all workers (including contract, part-time and furloughed, and employees terminated due to COVID-19) regardless of employer size.
   - Ensure unemployment insurance is accessible to all workers and increase the benefit to the highest possible amount.
   - Take any necessary action to amend or waive existing UI provisions to ensure the state is able to claim all federal funding.

5. **We must protect our most vulnerable people.**
   - Immediately halt forced closures of encampments. Unless individual housing units are available, do not clear encampments during community spread of COVID-19. Clearing encampments can cause people to disperse throughout the community and break connections with service providers. This increases the potential for infectious disease spread.
   - Ensure nearby restroom facilities have functional water taps, are stocked with hand hygiene materials (soap, drying materials) and bath tissue, and remain open to people experiencing homelessness 24 hours per day. If toilets or handwashing facilities are not available nearby, provide access to portable latrines with handwashing facilities for encampments of more than 10 people.

Signed (listed alphabetically):

**Organizations (44):**
American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai`i (Mandy Fernandes, JD, Policy Director)
American Diabetes Association (Lorraine Leslie, Director)
Breastfeeding Hawai`i (Lea Minton, Board President)
Caring for Hawai`i Neonates (Leilani Kahoʻāno, RN, Founder)
Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (Kūhiō Lewis, President and CEO)
County of Kaua`i Office of the Prosecuting Attorney (Justin Kollar, JD, Prosecuting Attorney)
Ear, Nose, & Throat Clinics of O`ahu (Christopher Regala, MD)
Faith Action for Community Equity (Ashleigh Loa, Executive Director)
Get Fit Kaua‘i (Bev Brody, Director)
Hale ‘Ōpio Kaua‘i, Inc. (Vonn Farinas Ramos, MA, MS, CSAC, Executive Director)
Hawai‘i Afterschool Alliance (Paula Adams)
Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law & Economic Justice (Gavin Thornton, Executive Director)
Hawai‘i Association Of School Psychologists (Leslie Baunach, MA/CAS, NCSP)
Hawai‘i Children’s Action Network (Deb Zysman, Executive Director)
Hawai‘i Independent Physicians Association (Greigh Hirata, MD, President)
Hawai‘i Public Health Institute (Jessica Yamauchi, Executive Director)
Hawai‘i State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (Angelina Mercado, Executive Director)
Hawai‘i State Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) (Liz Sager, President)
Hawai‘i Women in Filmmaking (Vera Zambonelli, PhD, Executive Director)
Hawai‘i Youth Services Network (Judith F. Clark, MPH, Executive Director)
HMSA Foundation (Amy Asselbaye, Executive Director)
Hobbs Medical, Inc. (Noelani Hobbs, MD, Owner)
Hawai‘i Psychiatric Medical Association (HPMA) (Celia Ona, MD, President)
Interfaith Communities in Action (Eric Anderson, M.Div., President)
Ka Ohana O Na Pua (Nancy Redfeather, BA, Director)
Kamali‘i Ola i ka ‘Āina (Kristy Sakai, President)
Lāna‘i Community Health Center (Chelsea Tadena, CMA, Medical Manager)
Mālama Kaua‘i (Joëll Edwards, Certified Learning and Development Specialist, Project Manager - Farm to School Hui/Food Access Coordinator Kaua‘i)
Maui AIDS Foundation (Chasity Cadaoas, Executive Director)
Mental Health America of Hawai‘i (Bryan L. Talisayan, Executive Director)
Midwives Alliance of Hawai‘i (Lea Minton, Board President)
Neighborhood Place of Puna (Paul Normann, MA, Executive Director)
O‘ahu Farm to School Hui (Debbie Millikan, PhD, Network Coordinator)
Philippine Nurses Association Maui Hawai‘i (Christina Porte, Registered Nurse, President)
Pratt Law Hawai‘i, LLLC (Kau‘i Pratt-Aquino, Esq., Principal Attorney & Founder)
Prevent Child Abuse Hawai‘i (Robert Raasch Barajas, Masters, Executive Director)
Pualei Kaohelaulli‘i (Pualei Kaohelaulli‘i, Para Medical Assistants/Community Health Worker)
Rainbow School (Cindy Barley, BA, Executive Director)
The Institute of Human Services (Leah Agcaoili, Children’s Program Specialist)
The Koa Clinic (Corinne Maul De Soto, ND, Physician, Clinic Director)
Urgent Care Hawai‘i (Donna Schmidt, LCSW, CEO)
West Hawai‘i Community Health Center (Gina Reyes, PsyD, Psychologist)
When We Shine (Melinda Carroll, BA, Executive Director)
Young Progressives Demanding Action (Will Caron, Co-Chair)

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