

Beyond Recovery: Reopening Hawai‘i

A strategy to reopen and reshape Hawai‘i’s economy



JULY 2020

New travel guidelines as the state moves forward

Hawai‘i has been called “a rare COVID-19 success story” among states because of how we’ve managed the pandemic. So how do we keep our case counts low as we open for more business and traveler activity? And how do we help local residents and the economy recover as we figure out our “new normal”? Those are some of the tough questions the state is grappling with as it looks to the future.

Q. What do you want people to remember as the state opens for more activity? What safeguards do we have in place?

A. We know the coronavirus spreads through face-to-face transmission, which is why physical distancing, masks and washing hands are still so important. Our system of screening, testing and contact tracing is working, but we can only be successful if people take precautions. Larger groups increase the probability of infection. Our success so far has meant we were able to lift the quarantine on interisland travel. Now, we need to welcome visitors in a safe and healthy way for the sake of our economy and people’s jobs.



STANDING TOGETHER: Governor Ige and state leaders announce new guidelines for trans-Pacific travel.

Q. What more can you tell us about the new processes for interisland and trans-Pacific travel?

A. So far, interisland travel without quarantines seems to be going smoothly. Our plan for trans-Pacific travel says that **starting Aug. 1 we will implement a pre-travel testing option for travelers arriving in Hawai‘i from out-of-state as an alternative to the 14-day quarantine. Travelers can get a valid COVID-19 PCR test prior to their arrival and show proof of a negative test result to avoid the 14-day quarantine.** We’re also continuing to work on developing travel corridors or “travel bubbles” between countries such as Japan and South Korea. It’s all about trying to minimize risk, but it will never be zero risk (See story on Page 3).

Q. Why is it important to welcome more visitors soon? What do you think tourism will look like with the “new normal?”

A. If we can’t find alternatives to the quarantine for trans-Pacific travelers, then our unemployment rate will continue to be 22 percent. Clearly, a lot of local businesses rely on the visitors who used to come to our islands, so we have to find a balance between safety and restarting the economy. Hawai‘i is one of the safest places on Earth for COVID-19, and we want to keep it that way. We need to “reimagine” tourism so visitors can be respectful of native Hawaiian culture, the environment and our public health.

Q. How are you and the Legislature deploying CARES Act funds and addressing the projected \$2.3 billion state budget deficit?

A. We’re looking at ways CARES Act money can help local residents with rent, unemployment benefits, and other basic needs as well as distributing funds to the counties. As for the budget shortfall, we have a lot of hard decisions to make as a state. I’ve already called for hiring and spending freezes and asked state agencies to identify additional cuts. We’ve taken out a federal loan to cover unemployment benefits and will be applying for another loan from the U.S. Treasury, but we are still short. Since it doesn’t look like we’re going to get any additional federal help, the last option would be pay cuts and furloughs.

Q. Why did you and mayors issue your strong statement on racial injustice after the killing of George Floyd?

A. We felt it was important to acknowledge the hurt and pain felt in the black community and by many minorities in this country. President Trump, on the other hand, was telling mayors and governors to crack down hard on the protests. On a call to the White House with other governors soon after George Floyd was killed, I was horrified that there was no acknowledgment by the president of hundreds of years of racial discrimination. He seemed more interested in arming up and “dominating the streets.” When one governor suggested that the country needed a call for unity, he (Trump) ended the call in disgust.

Sign of the times: Governor and four mayors Zoom in

It's not often you get to see **Governor Ige and Hawai'i's four county mayors "zooming" together** on Facebook Live, but that's what has been happening on the governor's **"Community Connection"** — a chance for the state's top leaders to connect virtually and answer questions from the public. From vacation rentals and increasing broadband to their biggest challenges during the pandemic, the group fielded questions and emphasized they were committed to keeping case counts low as the state reopens for business. Each mayor also talked about trying "out-of-the-box" approaches to family and work activities and how COVID-19 showed the state where the inequities were — especially in using the Internet for workers, students and teachers. They also shared concerns about illegal vacation rentals and a belief that hotels are better equipped to monitor visitors for quarantining.



Governor Ige with the mayors (clockwise): Kirk Caldwell, Mike Victorino, Harry Kim, ASL interpreter Laura Safranski, and Derek Kawakami.

Honolulu Mayor Kirk Caldwell said, "There's no playbook for this pandemic. We're learning how to deal with it." He talked about the success of "Open Street Sunday" that drew local families to Waikiki and plans for other city-sponsored outdoor events. He said he was also looking to amend his earlier order to allow musicians to perform safely in bars and other venues. **Kaua'i Mayor Derek Kawakami** got his family involved in producing daily "break the boredom" videos during the "Stay-at-Home" order. He added, "Our sense of aloha and taking care of each other has gotten us through many challenges, and that's what is going to get us through this one." **Hawai'i Mayor Harry Kim** said, "We all knew the tremendous impact of the 14-day quarantine rule. It was going to shut off the world we depend on economically, and with that, we shut out the virus. That's why we're the envy of the world."

Maui Mayor Mike Victorino said his county saw the advantages of telecommuting as a "win-win." He described how it reduced traffic as people alternated between working from home and offices and how it provided some promise for economic diversity. As for relaxing precautions such as wearing masks and physical distancing, Mayor Kawakami replied in the May 28 Facebook session: "We're still learning about this new virus. We do know this virus is very patient and very sneaky. You could be a carrier of COVID-19 and get people sick. Wearing a mask shows people you care about them." To view the May 28 and June 18 "Community Connections," go to <https://www.facebook.com/GovernorDavidIge/>.

State leaders join in protest of racial injustice



James Gonzalez photo
A protester at the Capitol.

The image of Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin kneeling on the neck of George Floyd while he gasped, "I can't breathe" was horrific enough. But for many — including Governor Ige, the state's four mayors and others — President Donald Trump's calls for military action in response to the peaceful protests that followed were "extremely disappointing" at a time when unity, not divisiveness, was needed.

The state's leaders said, "We join in mourning the tragic death of George Floyd and send our aloha to his family and friends. We understand the sadness, disappointment, anger and fear that so many across our nation live with daily. And we stand with those peacefully protesting long-standing injustices. Diversity is highly valued in Hawai'i, and we believe our residents can show the world how we live together respectfully."

Prepare now for hurricanes

With the added concerns of COVID-19, residents are urged to prepare now for the 2020 hurricane season, which runs through Nov. 30. "Hurricane season brings the very real threat of high winds, rain, storm surge, potential flooding, and landslides to the islands," said Governor Ige. "There could be significant impacts, even if a hurricane doesn't hit us directly.

Make an emergency plan, talk with your families and employees, and gather supplies to ensure that our communities are resilient."

Major Hurricanes					
Tropical Storm Winds: 39-79 mph (34-69 kt)	Category 1 Winds: 74-95 mph (64-82 kt)	Category 2 Winds: 96-110 mph (83-95 kt)	Category 3 Winds: 111-129 mph (96-113 kt)	Category 4 Winds: 130-156 mph (114-135 kt)	Category 5 Winds: 157+ mph (> 136 kt)
Iselle (2014)	Iwa (1982)	Flossie (2007)	Ignacio (2015)	Iniki (1992)	Lane (2018)

The National Weather Service is predicting an "average" storm potential for this year—2 to 6 tropical cyclones. "From an emergency management perspective, these look like good odds, but all it takes is just one storm to bring disaster to our islands," said Luke P. Meyers, administrator of the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA). "Due to the risks posed by the pandemic, we are adding hand sanitizers and face masks to our recommended 14-day emergency kit." Meyers, a UH graduate with a degree in geography with a climate emphasis, was appointed in March as HI-EMA's new administrator. His experience includes several years in emergency management at the federal, state and local levels, both in Hawai'i and the Pacific Northwest.

'Ohana reconnect as quarantine lifts on interisland flights

Friends and family can finally reconnect statewide with the lifting of the 14-day quarantine requirement for interisland travelers June 16. However, the move has come with changes in procedures to keep everyone safe and manage the flow of people. "Traveling interisland will be different, and we're asking the community for support," said the governor. "With our number of COVID-19 cases still manageable, it's an important step for reopening our kama'aina economy."

New travel procedures include:

- **Thermal screening** prior to departure. Anyone with a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher will not be allowed to board the plane.
- **A new, mandatory travel form** that can be **completed and submitted online or printed before arriving at the airport** will provide health screening and contact tracing details. Go to <https://health.hawaii.gov/travel/> for details and the form.
- **Plan to arrive early.** The Department of Transportation is asking travelers to allow plenty of time for the new screening process.

The **new travel form** asks for health-related details, contact information and travel history to make sure that "no one has traveled out of state and visited any of the other communities where the virus has actively circulated," the governor explained. "It's about establishing broader connectivity with people to help in tracking and responding to new COVID-19 cases. We have to ensure we don't experience a surge in cases that overwhelms our healthcare capacity. Attorney General Clare Connors added, "This is our first step in doing something other than a travel quarantine. It allows us to test the system that's going to be with us for the near future."

The **governor and health experts continue to emphasize taking personal responsibility to prevent the spread of COVID-19.** "The safe practices of physical distancing, using masks and washing our hands are just as important now as they were three months ago," said Department of Health director Dr. Bruce Anderson.

Pre-travel test option for trans-Pacific travel starts Aug. 1

It's official: Starting Aug. 1, travelers to Hawai'i can avoid the 14-day quarantine **if they get a negative COVID-19 PCR test result from a certified lab before departure.** The mandatory quarantine would remain in place for anyone who didn't get a certified negative test result. Traveling Hawai'i residents could also qualify for quarantine exemption if they're able to get tested on the mainland before coming home.

"We wanted to make sure we have a system **we can feel confident will work and will continue to keep our community safe and healthy,**" said Governor Ige. "This new program of pre-testing travelers is a way to identify those who are ill and ensure they don't infect the broader community." The pre-travel testing will be part of Hawai'i's multi-layered system of expanded screening, testing and contact tracing to manage any new COVID-19 cases, including continued temperature checks at the airports.

"**The community should feel assured** that our increased testing capacity and system of contact tracing is working to contain any outbreak, and has helped us maintain the lowest COVID-19 infection rate in the nation," the governor said. "I think everyone understands that providing an alternative to the quarantine is a step we need to take for the sake of people's jobs and our economy. We went from having the lowest unemployment rate in the country to the second-highest in a matter of weeks with the mandatory quarantine, so we have to find a way to bring in visitors safely." Watch the press conference at <https://bit.ly/2Z7IHS0>. Submit questions to <https://governor.hawaii.gov/contact-us/contact-the-governor/>.



Temperature checks, masks and a new interisland form are required for travelers.



From Aug. 1, trans-Pacific travel will include a pre-travel testing option.

Questions about unemployment?

Department of Labor and Industrial Relations

UNEMPLOYMENT FILING UPDATE

Common reasons for delays and denials of benefits

<https://labor.hawaii.gov/ui/>

93% of valid unemployment insurance claims have been processed and paid out — nearly \$1.7 billion. However, for those still waiting for benefits, there may be a reason. Go to the [link](#) here and watch for calls from (833) 901-2272 and (833) 901-2275 from DLIR.

BRIGHT SPOTS

Make your voice heard: Voting a hard-fought right

This month Hawai'i's citizens will participate in elections by mail (not just absentee ballots) for the first time in state history. **Starting July 21**, ballots will arrive in people's mailboxes for the primary election **Aug. 8**. U.S. Supreme Court associate justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg said, "Voting is the most basic right of a citizen —to participate in choosing the people who will make the laws of our country."

But it wasn't always that way. Before the 15th and 19th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution, only white men who owned property had the right to vote. The U.S. women's suffrage movement grew out of the anti-slavery movement of the 1840s. Pioneers such as Susan B. Anthony, Sojourner Truth and Elizabeth Cady Stanton led the fight, which sometimes ended in violence as demonstrators were beaten and imprisoned. This year marks the centennial of the 19th Amendment that gave women the right to vote.



As protesters nationwide have shown, discrimination persists in many forms and can affect the core of democracy. "Voting is one way to take a stand for what you believe in," said First Lady Dawn Amano-Ige. "Now, more than ever, we need to emphasize that citizenship means taking an active part in making our government work." For more information on voting in this year's elections, go to <https://elections.hawaii.gov/>. **General election ballots will be delivered Oct. 16 for the Nov. 3 election.** Keep

checking <https://www.facebook.com/FirstLadyofHawaii/> for ideas for parents, books for children, timely information and short interviews with people in the community.



Aloha Free Clinic lives up to its name to provide health care



Dr. Jim Ireland and Lt. Gov. Josh Green at the clinic's opening.

For those who have lost their health insurance because of COVID-19, the new **Aloha Free Clinic** in Kalihi offers a lifeline. Open weekdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., the clinic in the Kalihi Medical Center at 2055 N. King Street provides free primary care and medications — especially for those with chronic conditions — until they can regain their healthcare coverage.

"If you have diabetes or high blood pressure and you don't treat that for three or four months, that can lead to strokes, kidney failure and permanent damage and just from not having access to care," said Dr. James Ireland, who joined with Lt. Gov. Josh Green to spearhead the effort. The clinic will provide in-person and telemedicine services from volunteer doctors and nurses at least through the end of

August. Green, who is also a physician, said the telemedicine is important to reach patients on the neighbor islands. "If they have a need, we'll set it up," he told Hawai'i News Now.

The challenge of opening the clinic in just two weeks fell to clinical director Dr. Emily Brewer, a nurse practitioner who has volunteered for relief and rebuilding efforts in Haiti and Thailand. She oversees an army of volunteer doctors and nurses who provide the basic health services as well as outreach workers who help connect patients to ongoing systems of medical care.

"Some people came to us, thinking they weren't covered by Med-QUEST, when actually they were," she said. "Part of our job is to raise awareness about community health centers and services patients are eligible for." Brewer said being part of the clinic, which saw 42 patients in just its first week of operation, has been immensely rewarding. "So many amazing individuals have come together to make this clinic happen," she said. "Most people go into the healthcare profession because they want to help others, but the response from those offering to volunteer was more than we expected." To make an appointment, contact alohafreeclinic@gmail.com, call (808) 726-2600, or just walk in.



Clinical director Dr. Emily Brewer with HPU nurse practitioner student Jenny Greenlee and volunteer pharmacist Kenneth Lo.

Contact Us: Executive Chambers, State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813
Phone: (808) 586-0034 Fax: (808) 586-0006
Hilo Office (808) 974-6262 | Kona Office (808) 323-4542
Maui Office (808) 243-5798 | Kaua'i Office (808) 274-3100

Capitol Connection is a regular e-newsletter that provides you with updates from the fifth floor of the State Capitol. The newsletter is available on-line and via subscription. Check the governor's website at governor.hawaii.gov to subscribe. Also, follow the governor on Twitter and Instagram @govhawaii and <https://www.facebook.com/GovernorDavidIge>.