

**PROTECT
PUBLIC HEALTH**

**REVIVE
THE ECONOMY**

**STRENGTHEN
OUR COMMUNITY**

CAPITOL CONNECTION

JULY 2021

From the governor: Getting vaccinated to reach our goals

If ever there's a time for Hawai'i to pull together, it's now. To reach the benchmarks for lifting travel and other restrictions, to help businesses thrive, to get people back to work and seeing family and friends — all of that hinges on more residents getting their COVID-19 vaccinations. The **#HIGotVaccinated** campaign is reaching into every corner of the state with incentives and access to shots. Meanwhile, more bills became law in the last month to address long-standing inequities, protect our oceans and help people impacted by the pandemic.



Q. Are we close to reaching the benchmarks you've set for Hawai'i residents being fully vaccinated?

A. We are definitely on track to reach our **60 percent vaccination target. The county mayors and I have decided that domestic travelers to Hawai'i who were fully vaccinated in the U.S. can bypass testing and quarantine starting July 8.** Travelers must upload their vaccination record in the state's Safe Travels program and bring a hard copy with them. We've all worked hard to make it easier for residents to return home and for friends, family and visitors to plan their trips. We're able to reach this milestone because so many in our community have been vaccinated.



Gov. Ige, DOH director Dr. Libby Char (center back) and community partners for #HIGotVaccinated.

Q. What's the outlook for reaching the 70 percent vaccination rate when all travel and other restrictions will be lifted?

A. Reaching that goal is going to depend on all of us encouraging folks we know, especially young adults and other groups who have yet to be vaccinated. It's a challenge the White House says many states are facing. We're seeing COVID-19 clusters of unvaccinated individuals who can spread the disease, so it's important for more people to be protected. We're also using the baseline of the state's whole population because even those who are not eligible to be vaccinated can be infected by the virus and infect others. It affects the health of the whole community and helps determine the point at which we would feel comfortable dropping restrictions.

Q. What should people know about the eviction moratorium, currently set to end Aug. 6 in the latest emergency proclamation?

A. People should be working with their landlords, who will be taking action once the moratorium is lifted. I just signed a bill (HB1376) that provides for mediation and was supported by consumer advocates, the state Judiciary, realtors and others. It gives tenants time to repay overdue rent and avoid eviction, depending on how much they owe. We're also working with the counties for rent relief programs so more people don't become homeless.

Q. Why did you make it a priority to sign the package of ocean-related protection bills?

A. Several of those bills were critical to our **Sustainable Hawai'i Initiative** from 2016 to effectively manage 30 percent of Hawai'i's near-shore waters by 2030. The stewardship fund provided for in HB1019 is based on being able to assess visitor fees at state parks to generate revenue and to put those funds back into park improvements so people can see the connection.

Q. Why is the Intent to Veto list of bills announced June 21 an important part of the process?

A. It gives people a chance before the **final July 6 veto deadline** to share their thoughts with me. I'm not required to veto every bill on the list, but I can't veto a bill if it isn't included. The list reflects concerns about a bill's legality, practicality of implementation and/or lack of transparency. The state's economic picture has significantly brightened since the start of the legislative session. We've also learned about some budget bill gaps that need correcting on the use of federal rescue funds. Also of concern is HB862 involving Hawai'i Tourism Authority funding, which is on the Intent to Veto list. The public can comment at <https://governor.hawaii.gov/contact-us/comments-on-legislation/>.

#HIGotVaccinated announces winners, extends campaign

By the time you read this, Hawai'i could be nearing the goal of 60% of the population being fully vaccinated. And to keep the momentum going, coordinators have announced a new round of prizes, including cash, that will **start July 12 and run through Aug. 20**. More #HIGotVaccinated prize winners will be announced through the summer, but the real winner is the whole community in the state's push to reach a 70% vaccination rate. A Hilo woman and a Honolulu man were the first two winners of the campaign. **Elaine Nishiura** won 100,000 HawaiianMiles, provided by Hawaiian Airlines. **Mark Matsuo** won two round-trip tickets to anywhere Alaska Airlines flies. "I really appreciate it and was very excited to have won, especially since my husband and I just celebrated our 36th wedding anniversary," Nishiura said. "I would like to tell everyone to get vaccinated so we can get to a more safe and normal lifestyle." Matsuo added, "Mahalo to Alaska Airlines. So glad I got vaccinated, and you should too!"



Elaine Nishiura and Mark Matsuo were the first prize winners.

The DOH's campaign of outreach, education and access, along with the incentives, is helping motivate more people to take action, say the coordinators. More than 240,000 vaccinated individuals have registered for a chance to win prizes, along with the separate discounts to restaurants and businesses statewide. Comedian Frank De Lima even composed a song to urge people to get vaccinated. Some people have asked, "Isn't the health protection enough without the freebies?" But **DOH spokesperson Brooks Baehr** said the department's multi-pronged approach is meant to give people every reason to get their shots. "To make vaccinations convenient, we've gone to beach parks and shopping malls as well as worked with community partners for targeted outreach," he said. "We found some people who didn't know the vaccinations were free. Others just wanted more information or couldn't find the time until now."

Baehr said the prizes and website have been community-driven, thanks to **coordinator Patrick Bullard**, managing director of Heinrich & Bullard Marketing. The health department has focused on answering people's questions and making sure the shots were easily available through multiple community partners. To register for the vaccine incentive, go to <https://higotvaccinated.com/>.

New senior housing, veterans home groundbreakings held

In the midst of a tight housing market, two projects are moving forward to help both kūpuna and veterans. The first is the **Halewai'olu Senior Residences in Chinatown**, which will provide more than 150 senior low-income households — age 62 and up — with one or two-bedroom units. The state's Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corp. (HHFDC) authorized some \$90 million in tax-exempt bonds and tax credits to help finance the project. Michaels Development is compiling a list of prospective residents, with the project scheduled for completion in 2023. Governor Ige said developing affordable housing has been one of his top priorities. He joined Mayor Rick Blangiardi in praising the start of the long-planned project. "This public-private partnership is exactly the kind of effort we need for our kūpuna. Today's groundbreaking provides hope for future residents."



Also last month a groundbreaking was held in Kapolei for a **120-bed veterans home named after former Hawai'i U.S. senator Daniel K. Akaka**, a champion of veterans issues. The new facility, also set for completion in 2023, will offer both long-term and short-term care for veterans, eligible spouses and Gold Star parents and will be open to all veterans living in Hawai'i. In addition to assistance from HHFDC, the governor thanked the legislature for providing more resources and Hawai'i's congressional delegation for providing the "seed money to keep this dream alive."



(top) Kahu Kordell with officials at Halewai'olu Senior Residences. An architectural rendering of the Daniel K. Akaka Veterans Home.

Hawai'i-Okinawa Clean Energy partnership renewed



Governors Ige and Tamaki with their clean energy agreements.

The clean energy partnership between Hawai'i and Okinawa was reinforced recently with the renewal of a joint Memorandum of Cooperation between Governor Ige and Governor Yasuhiro Tamaki of Okinawa. The agreement acknowledges their shared interests in developing energy technologies to fight climate change and support clean energy growth.

"Sharing information and learning from each other can reduce the time needed to transform our energy systems," said Governor Ige. "Together we can power a sustainable future and support clean, affordable energy in our communities." Governor Tamaki noted, "We want to further promote technical exchanges with private businesses to strengthen our relationship." Hawai'i and Okinawa share similar backgrounds and challenges, including higher electricity costs from importing petroleum products and being popular tourist destinations.

New laws to promote social justice and protect others

Sometimes what matters most in a society is how we treat each other. Values supporting social justice and protecting the most vulnerable were the foundation for a series of bills signed into law last month by Governor Ige. He praised the efforts of legislators and advocates for recognizing “members in our community who have endured struggles, both past and present” and for providing inspiration to move forward. The list of bills included:

- **SB939 - Recognizes June 19 as “Juneteenth,”** a special day to commemorate the end of slavery in the United States and recognize African Americans for their contributions. President Biden also signed a bill to make June 19 a federal holiday.
- **SB697 - Designates January as “Kalaupapa Month”** to recognize the sacrifices and contributions the residents of Kalaupapa have made to Hawai‘i’s history.
- **HB940 - Protects the elderly from financial exploitation**— To better protect Hawai‘i’s seniors and vulnerable adults from being victimized in situations involving securities.
- **SB793 - Ensures that people with disabilities are guaranteed the minimum wage** - Repeals the state law allowing people with disabilities to be paid less.
- **HB1192 - Replaces payday lending laws with installment loans** - To help those living paycheck to paycheck so they aren’t caught in a cycle of debt.



Chief Justice Mark Recktenwald, the Iges and other officials celebrate with Samantha Neyland.

Miss Hawai‘i USA 2020 Samantha Neyland, who launched the Hawai‘i for Juneteenth coalition, said she always believed the campaign would be successful. “Hawai‘i is a melting pot of diversity,” she said. “We have always stood at the forefront of speaking out against racial and social injustice.”

Sen. Roz Baker spoke of Kalaupapa as “such a beautiful place with such a tragic history” for the 8,000 Hansen’s disease patients who were sent there. “Every January this will give us an opportunity to think about how we treat others and how others should not be diminished because of disease, disability or circumstance.” **Sen. Lynn DeCoite** added, “We’ve come a long way and have medicine and education on our side now.”

Governor signs bills to protect Hawai‘i’s ocean resources



The governor signed bills to protect marine resources.

The state’s ocean resources are now better protected with Governor Ige’s signing into law nine bills to mark **World Oceans Day June 8**. They ranged from criminalizing the intentional killing of sharks in state waters to generating new revenue through tourism for ocean stewardship projects. “The ocean is our greatest connector,” said the governor. “It connects us to our food, culture, leisure, businesses and each other. We need to mālama our oceans in the face of climate change, coral bleaching, declining fish populations and ocean pollution.”

Both the governor and Suzanne Case, director of the Department of Land and Natural Resources, thanked state legislators who were instrumental in the passage of the bills. “This was certainly one of the most ocean conservation-oriented legislative session in decades,” said Case. “These measures will advance the goals of Governor Ige’s **Holomua: Marine 30x30 Initiative**.” That commitment calls for the protection of at least 30% of the most sensitive nearshore waters by 2030 — part of the Ige administration’s **Sustainable Hawai‘i Initiative** announced at the 2016 World Conservation Congress held in Honolulu. The bills signed into law include:

- **Protection of sharks** (HB 553) - Prohibits intentionally catching or killing sharks in state waters. Exemptions include scientific research, public safety, and self-defense. (Effective Jan. 1, 2022).
- **Commercial Marine Vessel Licenses** (HB1016) - Allows DLNR to issue a single CMVL for all persons aboard a vessel.
- **Crustaceans** (HB1017) - Repeals statute prohibiting the taking or killing of female spiny lobsters and Kona and Samoan crabs. DLNR’s Division of Aquatic Resources can now modify crustacean regulations as needed.
- **Lay net permits** (HB1018) - Authorizes DLNR to establish rules for lay net permits for use or possession. Requires annual permit renewal and the ability to withhold or revoke permits for violators.
- **Ocean stewardship special fund; user fee** (HB1019) - Provides more consistent support for management of ocean resources through a user fee of \$1 per passenger for commercial vessels, such as dive operations and whale-watching charters. (Effective Jan. 1, 2024).
- **Natural resources rules; adaptive management** (HB1020) - Authorizes the Board of Land and Natural Resources to implement adaptive management measures in response to rapidly changing conditions when needed. (Effective Oct. 1, 2021).
- **Natural resource inspection** (HB1022) - Authorizes DLNR officers to inspect coolers that could carry regulated aquatic life.
- **Non-resident recreational marine fishing license** (HB1023) - Establishes a recreational marine fishing license requirement for non-residents in Hawai‘i. Children under 15 and active duty military and their families are exempt. Revenues go to fisheries management.
- **Special license plates** (SB772) - Authorizes issuance of special license plates relating to forest and ocean conservation. Revenues will be deposited into special funds for forest stewardship and beach restoration.

Go to <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dar/announcements/aquatic-resources-2021-legislative-wrap-up/> and [Holomua: Marine 30x30 Initiative](#).

Kaukau 4 Keiki, World Oceans Day and 'Ohana Readers

Thousands of keiki in Hawai'i's rural areas will have easier access to healthy food this summer, thanks to the new "Kaukau 4 Keiki" program launched last month. The partnership of government, private and community partners is providing weekly breakfast and lunch meal kits for children with zip codes starting with 967—statewide. Families can receive weekly kits of breakfast and lunch items through July 31 by signing up at www.kaukau4keiki.org or calling 2-1-1. Currently, because of high demand, families will be placed on a waiting list and will be notified on a first come, first served basis.



"With some students living in communities 45 minutes from school, it's not practical for a family to drive down every day to pick up just one lunch," said Mrs. Ige, who helped spearhead the project. "After visiting Ka'u High School, we learned that teachers were filling the gaps. We wanted to support that effort and do our part to provide food in a way that works for families." Dexter Kishida, one of the county coordinators, said so far the program is able to help more than 7,320 children, but they hope to increase that number with more community support as well as offer the program every year. The DOE's Grab-and-Go summer meal program is also continuing through July 19 at 80 school sites statewide. Students can get a lunch and a breakfast for the following day to help provide them with nutritious food.



'Ōlelo Channel 53's "Conversations with the First Lady" will feature the book "Otis and Will Discover the Deep: The Record-Setting Dive of the Bathysphere," a little-known true story of two explorers successfully engineering the first bathysphere, a hollow metal ball used to study and maneuver through deep sea waters. The installment also spotlights Nicole Yamase, the first Pacific Islander to reach Mariana Trench's lowest point, the Challenger Deep, which lies nearly seven miles below the ocean surface. Yamase is a UH doctoral student studying the effects of climate change on marine plants. "I asked her what she would say to students who are interested in STEM fields," continued Mrs. Ige. "She said to work hard and not be afraid to ask questions because if she can do it, others can do it too." The segment, which originally aired in June for World Oceans Day, repeats on July 4, 11, and 18 at 5:30 p.m.



The First Lady, who chairs the National Governors Association Spouses' Leadership Committee, convened its summer meeting — this time to call attention to children's mental health. "Because of COVID-19, families have had to deal with unemployment, food insecurity and financial struggles. Children had to make a lot of adjustments in a short period of time," she said. "We need to be aware of their mental health because if they're not ready emotionally and behaviorally, then the academic portion will be even more difficult." Mrs. Ige also traveled to Kaua'i to highlight the Hawai'i State Public Library System's summer reading program and her 'Ohana Readers project, which is expanding to Waimea and Kekaha. Families with children age 4 and younger in those zip codes can register at the Waimea Public Library, call (808) 338-6848 or email kwacirc@librarieshawaii.org to have free, high-quality books mailed to them.

Hana Career Pathways offers free training for skilled jobs



Trainees in certified nursing assistant program.

If you're unemployed or looking for a more promising career, the new Hana Career Pathways is offering free training for in-demand jobs in Hawai'i. The state's Workforce Development Council partnered with UH community colleges and others to win the three-year, \$13.3 million federal grant — awarded to only eight states in the nation. The program offers short-term training in growing fields of health care, information technology and the skilled trades as well as tuition assistance, job search help and other support services.

The program builds on the Hawai'i Executive Collaborative's Talent Roadmap to Recovery, which identified 274 living wage jobs and 137 promising credentials and non-

degree certificates that lead to good-paying, career-building pathways. Jobs range from computer networking and maintenance electricians to certified nursing assistants and phlebotomists. The grant is expected to cover 3,000 training opportunities, with some options for paid internships with local companies. Many of the courses are online or a combination of in-person and online sessions to reach people on different islands. To apply, go to uhcc.hawaii.edu/reimagine.

Safe Travels & Gatherings Update

(6.21.2021)



Beginning July 8, 2021:

- Hawai'i will accept vaccination records from other states/territories to bypass COVID test/quarantine
- Social gatherings increased to 25 indoors, 75 outdoors
- Restaurants can hold up to 75% capacity (max 25 indoors/75 outdoors)

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