Subject: Your kōkua needed this Labor Day weekend

Aloha Mai Kākou,

As we approach the Labor Day holiday weekend, the State of Hawaiʻi is struggling with an unprecedented and disastrous surge in COVID-19 cases.

Because of COVID, our hospital system across the state is in danger of moving toward a worst-case scenario. If that happens, healthcare leaders warn that choices will have to be made, people may not receive the care they need, and some will die.

But every one of us can do our individual and collective part to stop the spread of the virus.

The first step is to get vaccinated. I'm proud that the vast majority of State Executive Branch employees have taken that step. ***I'm asking you to do everything you can to encourage your employees to get vaccinated.*** Let them know the vaccines are safe and effective and will help protect all of us from severe illness and death. And it will help sustain our healthcare system.

But there are EXTRA steps everyone can take during this critical time, and ***I hope you'll share them with your employees prior to the Labor Day weekend***:
- Avoid closed spaces with poor ventilation
- Avoid crowded places with many people nearby and
- Avoid close-contact settings, such as close-range conversations

You can also reduce your risk of getting sick by:
- Setting your own curfews
- Avoiding activities that could lead to exposure and illness or increase your risk of trauma
- Getting tested a few days after you arrive in Hawaiʻi if you've traveled

And you've heard this many times before:
- Mask up
- Maintain physical distancing
- Stay home when you're sick
- Wash your hands frequently

Our choices can help our community prevent the worst-case scenario in our hospital system. Please encourage your employees to act responsibly this holiday weekend and moving forward as we battle this highly transmissible and deadly virus. It's for the sake of our families, our communities, and our state.

Mahalo for helping to stop the spread!

With warmest regards,

David Y. Ige
Governor
State of Hawai'i