



## HAWAII COVID-19 JOINT INFORMATION CENTER

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### NEWS RELEASE

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **LARGEST SINGLE DAY INCREASE IN COVID-19 CASES SINCE EARLY APRIL** ***Despite Spike, State Officials Say All Systems Working as Planned***

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i Dept. of Health (DOH) is reporting 27 new positive cases of coronavirus today, which is the highest number reported since April 4. Health Director, Dr. Bruce Anderson said, "Despite our recent spike in cases, all of our testing and contact tracing procedures are working exactly as intended. Additional cases are being identified and added to the case count as a result of aggressive investigations, contact tracing and testing of household contacts."

The majority of new cases reported over the past week are associated with community clusters in large households with crowded conditions, adult care and long-term nursing facilities, and with a faith-based group gathering at a home. Hawai'i State Epidemiologist Dr. Sarah Park, commented, "These clusters really emphasize our call for the continuation of safe practices, including physical distancing, using face coverings, frequent hand washing, and staying home and away from others when sick. Virtually all of the newly reported cases of COVID-19 are due to community-spread, often from a group setting."

Many of the recent cases have been associated with clusters. One faith community in Waipahu, having gatherings in a home, has prompted health authorities to reiterate safe practices for people being together in crowded conditions. Guidance, prepared by the City and County of Honolulu, based on best practices from sources such as DOH, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and from research institutions and municipalities across the country is available online: <https://www.oneoahu.org/house-of-worship-guidance>

There has been speculation that the recent rise in cases is due to large protests. Dr. Park added, "At this time there is no evidence that recent protests have led to the recent spike in COVID-19 cases in Hawai'i. Nonetheless, we continue to strongly encourage physical distancing and the use of face masks when people are engaged in practicing First Amendment rights, or while in any other large gatherings, with people who don't live in the same household." The health department says testing is based on a low threshold to test. In other words, once a resident or caregiver tests positive and the health investigation determines the source of infection, DOH supports broader testing of exposed healthcare givers and residents in conjunction with public health investigation. Part of DOH's investigation procedure continues to

be extensive contact tracing to get close contacts of an infected person into isolation and monitoring. The department and its partners continue to conduct outreach and education for impacted individuals and communities.

Dr. Anderson concluded, “we anticipated an increase in COVID-19 cases associated with more community activity and business re-openings. This is the critical time, with this week’s resumption of interisland travel and the anticipated re-opening of other air travel at some point in the future, for all of us to act with care, to protect our loved ones, particularly our kupuna, and to continue physical distancing, face masks, and all of the safe practices that have now become our new norm ... at least for now.”

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