



August 21, 2020

Aloha Governor Ige and Hawaii Leaders:

I am writing you from the grassroots organization HALE Hawai'i, whose mission is to help Hawai'i's people and its leaders to keep Hawai'i safe from COVID-19. We want leaders to know that preventing the virus from coming in and spreading is very important to most of Hawai'i's residents. Tools are just becoming available to make this goal so much more feasible.

We would like to add our support to the Hawaii HealthCare Provider Taskforce (HICOVID) open letter dated August 2020 <https://hicovid.org/>. All of our suggestions dovetail with their letter.

We believe that the goal for Hawaii needs to be changed from Mitigation to Elimination. We have learned from very recent and painful experience that trying to keep our numbers in the double digits is a not possible, since this virus is so infectious and grows exponentially and out of control in the blink of an eye. We do realize that the goal of zero cases means that some cases will slip through, but with strict safety protocol like New Zealand's, the cases can be brought under control and again eliminated in a relatively short amount of time.

Our suggestions for elimination are in four steps and relate to the HICOVID suggestions:

1. The State needs to purchase the newly available saliva testing and become self-sustainable in Hawai'i. Priority for its use would be for healthcare providers (including care home providers), first responders, schools and those in essential positions that are at high risk for exposure. The tests could also be used for incoming travelers and would be made available for universal testing, so that those infected who are asymptomatic would be identified and isolated. The saliva test created by the New Yale University is available now; their email contact is [salivadirect@gmail.com](mailto:salivadirect@gmail.com). More information about it can be found here: <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/covid-19-spit-tests-used-by-nba-are-now-authorized-by-fda/>. The University of Hawai'i has developed and is in the latter part of testing their saliva test product, Assure, which the State would switch to once it is FDA-approved. Status updates on it can be found here: <https://www.oceanit.com/news/press-release-assure-19-aug-19/> and their website is at: <https://assure19.com/>
2. Improve contact tracing by using the digital contact tracing system that has already been developed in Hawai'i by Kevin Vacarello of Sustain Hawaii. They have developed a free app that people could use to track their movements and choose to share it voluntarily should they be COVID-19 positive. Some people would prefer to work with a live contact tracer, but having the option of a digital system that remembers where you have been would make tracking so much easier on the individual and would reduce the amount of work needed by live contact tracers.



This link provides information on Sustain Hawaii: <https://www.sustainhawaii.org/kevin-vaccarello.html> and this is information on the Safe Travels app: <https://www.safe-travels.org/>

3. Better tracking for incoming travelers (both returning residents and visitors). We recommend using the same Safe Travels app for this: <https://www.safe-travels.org/> and making this a requirement for incoming travelers.
4. Enforcing quarantine for incoming travelers. Resources need to be created to allow for those with authority to fully enforce quarantine breakers. Enforcement would be made much easier by use of the Safe Travels tracking device. HALE Hawai'i recommends following the Kauai Plan as a model for a quicker quarantine with more testing: <https://halehawaii.cc/kauai-plan> and our petition shows support of the plan: <https://sign.moveon.org/petitions/we-need-a-covid-19-free-hawaii-i-and-effective-quarantine-enforcement>

Hawai'i leaders, eliminating COVID-19 in our beautiful state is very possible following these four steps, with tools that have recently become available! Please protect our home for all of us!

With much hope and aloha,

Kai Duponte, MSW

HALE Hawai'i

[www.halehawaii.cc](http://www.halehawaii.cc)