Hawai‘i, March 23rd, 2020

From: The Hawai‘i Healthcare Provider Community

To: David Ige, Governor of the State of Hawai‘i
Bruce S. Anderson, PhD, Director, Department of Health, State of Hawai‘i
Major Kenneth Hara, Adjutant General, Department of Defense, State of Hawai‘i
Linda Takayama, Chief of Staff, Governor of the State of Hawai‘i
Ronald D. Kouchi, Senate President
Scott Saiki, House of Representatives Speaker
Kirk Caldwell, Mayor County of Oahu
Michael Victorino, Mayor County of Maui
Harry Kim, Mayor County of Hawai‘i

Our Hawai‘i physician community has significant concerns about many aspects of the State of Hawai‘i’s approach to the management of COVID-19. This includes the measures recently announced by the State to condemn the spread of COVID-19. The emergency rules to promote social distancing are unnecessarily complicated, therefore difficult to understand by the public. This leads to confusion and non-compliance which puts the entire community at risk. We urge you to endorse an immediate mandatory 14-day lockdown of the entire State of Hawai‘i. Only by doing so, can we make a difference in flattening the curve of spread to reduce the risk of overwhelming our healthcare system.

We recommend providing only the following two reasons for our citizens to leave the shelter of their home:
1. Access to food, gas stations, banks, and pharmacies.
2. Access to healthcare.

We recommend assigning our citizens time slots and entry limits to shop for groceries and essentials in order to limit exposure.

We recommend the closure of all non-essential businesses.

Essential employees who are exempt from lockdown are:
- Healthcare employees
- Pharmacy employees
- Utility workers for the State
- Police officers
- Airport staff
- First responders
- Dispatchers
- Paramedics
- Firefighters
- Businesses for food and supply demand

Without a clear strategy of spread mitigation, isolation and quarantine, we put our community at risk. Epidemiological models clearly outline the need for IMMEDIATE and DRASTIC INTERVENTION in order to make a difference in community spread.

As many as 80% of cases are asymptomatic or have minimal symptoms which further promotes spread. We continue to demand the need for widespread testing of all symptomatic patients and those with a history of exposure to COVID-19. We request assistance to obtain mobile and remote testing capabilities and to ensure that test centers and hospitals continue to obtain more test kits with local processing of results in less than 12 hours.
We are asking the Governor of Hawai‘i and the Department of Health to provide a comprehensive healthcare plan to manage this crisis. This healthcare plan should identify for our healthcare providers the plan for a significant surge of patients. We need clear guidance for the following items:

**COMPREHENSIVE COVID-19 HEALTHCARE PLAN:**
1. Mitigation strategies using shelter-in-place and quarantine
2. Enforcement of mitigation strategies
3. Tracking of infected patients
4. Protection of homeless, elderly, sick and poor
5. Workforce management and recruitment
6. Testing capacity, definition of resources vs needs
7. PPE, ventilator and medication resource management
8. Supply chain demands and robustness
9. Bed/ICU capacity management and tracking
10. Establishment of overflow facilities
11. Protection of healthcare workers
12. Information/education of healthcare providers
13. Housing and childcare for healthcare workers
14. Workforce emergency assistance and benefits
15. Social medical outreach
16. Telehealth implementations

Additionally, our physician community is highly concerned about the shortage of PPE (personal protective equipment) in our hospitals and at the frontlines. This needs to be addressed swiftly to protect our healthcare community. The shortage puts our crucial providers at an unacceptably high risk to their own health. If many providers get infected w COVID-19, they are unable to fulfill the needs of our community, further weakening our healthcare system. This will accelerate shortages, and many will be without access to proper care for medical conditions even unrelated to COVID-19.

At this time, there is no representation of healthcare professionals at the command table. This appears grossly negligent, as the handling of this crisis is a matter of healthcare resource management. The efforts taken by the government are meaningful, but they are not guided by medical experts. Our community of Hawai‘i healthcare professionals would like to see Dr. Josh Green and other healthcare experts represented at the command table and their recommendations driving the course of action to control this pending disaster.

Our Hawai‘i Healthcare Community strongly endorses Lieutenant Governor Dr. Josh Green to have a seat at the command table. We recommend the appointment of an expert multidisciplinary physician taskforce to help create a state-guided and centralized healthcare command center. This taskforce should include but not be limited to physicians specializing in Infectious Disease, Pulmonology, Emergency Medicine, Hospital Medicine, Critical Care, Epidemiology, Primary Care, along with community physician leaders to support the Lieutenant Governor.

Please note that any delay in taking proper actions puts our community at high risk and could lead to fatal outcomes.

Sincerely,
The Hawai‘i Healthcare Provider Community

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