OPEN LETTER

Maui, HI, March 14th, 2020

From: The Maui Healthcare Provider Community
To: Bruce S. Anderson, PhD
    Director of Health,
    Department of Health, State of Hawaii

Dear Dr. Anderson,

On Tuesday 3/10/2020, Lieutenant Governor Dr. Josh Green, Hilton R. Raethel, MPH, President/CEO of the Healthcare Association of Hawaii, and our legislative delegation met with the Maui physician leadership at Maui Memorial Hospital to discuss our island-wide response to COVID-19.

At that meeting, Dr. Green and Mr. Raethel offered their support to provide a COVID-19 testing site by using resources of the Healthcare Association of Hawaii. This offer of support was acknowledged and also requested by the Maui Healthcare Provider Community. We pleaded for an outpatient COVID-19 testing site separate from our hospitals and clinics.

The physician offices on Maui do not have enough staff or access to resources to appropriately conduct testing of patients for COVID-19. Many offices are already out of PPE. There is limited access to test kits for patients with a suspected infection of COVID-19. A large influx of COVID-19 patients could rapidly exhaust the capacity of our hospital. We are very concerned that if we do not act quickly, we will face the exponential spread of the virus with a high incidence of very sick patients overwhelming the resources of our healthcare community.

Based on the suggestion of Dr. Green, the Maui Healthcare Provider Community is now asking the Department of Health in the form of an open letter for access to resources to implement a COVID-19 testing center that will allow widespread screening of patients with respiratory symptoms in order to implement quarantine measures to those affected and by that hopefully slow down the spread of the virus. We strongly believe that social distancing alone without widespread testing will not be efficient to avoid a pandemic. A pandemic would have disastrous impact on healthcare as well as the economy of Maui.

For the health of our community, we are asking you to activate Disaster Medical Assistance Teams to set up a regional COVID-19 testing site on Maui as soon as possible.

Sincerely,
The Maui Healthcare Provider Community