



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### COVID-19 JOINT INFORMATION CENTER DAILY MEDIA UPDATE

#### **DOH State Laboratories Division now capable of COVID-19 testing**

Hawaii Department of Health is now capable of in-state testing for COVID-19 and, on average, results can be ready within 24-48 hours of a sample being collected. This is a new, major development that enhances the state's prevention and mitigation response capabilities to further safeguard the health of the people in Hawaii.

Previously, the state had earlier reported that testing capability would not be ready until early next week. The DOH State Laboratories Division staff worked closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention around the clock to complete the validation process and receive approval from the CDC to move forward with the testing procedure in Hawaii.

This morning, the Department of Health was able to successfully test a visitor from California as a Person Under Investigation. The individual was a healthcare worker who had been providing care to a patient who later was confirmed for COVID-19. The healthcare worker was notified by the CDC through its tracing system. The Department of Health team was notified late last night about the possible case and collaborated with the CDC to contact the individual who was quarantined at a hotel in Honolulu. DOH staff collected samples today from the individual and the State Laboratories Division confirmed it negative for COVID-19. The testing involves a nasal pharyngeal swab, which is a sample taken from the back of the nose and throat.

#### **No cases of COVID-19 identified in Hawaii at this time**

Currently, there are no cases of COVID-19 identified in Hawaii. DOH is actively preparing for possible cases and working with state, county, and federal partners including the medical community in Hawaii. The following summary as of Feb. 28 shows the number of individuals being monitored or under quarantine. Many of these individuals were identified through screening by federal officials at the Daniel K. Inouye International Airport. These numbers fluctuate often as travelers arrive, depart, or begin and end their self-monitoring with supervision by DOH.

#### **COVID-19 Summary of Numbers as of Feb. 28, 2020**

**(updated as new information becomes available)**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Number of Confirmed Case(s)                                      | 0  |
| Number of Persons Under Investigation (current, testing pending) | 0  |
| Number of Persons Under Investigation (closed, testing negative) | 1  |
| Number of Persons Under Quarantine                               | 0  |
| Number of Persons Self-Monitoring with DOH supervision           | 80 |

Of the 80 individuals who are self-monitoring with public health supervision, 73 are on Oahu, 5 are on Hawaii Island, 1 is on Maui, and 1 is on Kauai.

**Confirmed:** Meets CDC criteria and positive test result received from a certified laboratory.

**Person Under Investigation (PUI):** Meets CDC criteria for investigation and testing pending.

**Quarantine:** Individuals are required to remain in a designated location and separated from others. They are actively monitored by Department of Health staff. Quarantine is enforceable by law.

**Monitoring:** Individuals voluntarily remain at home and refrain from work, school, gathering places, and public transit. They communicate daily with Department of Health staff.

**Updating physician guidance and criteria for persons under investigation**

On Feb. 27, the CDC updated the definition of a Person Under Investigation (PUI) to include travelers to other areas. CDC has posted updated [Criteria to Guide Evaluation of PUI for COVID-19](#). On Feb. 26, the DOH issued a [medical advisory](#) which encourages clinicians to reach out to the health department to discuss testing if they have a patient hospitalized with severe respiratory illness and no identified source of exposure.

**Business continuity planning**

Should the situation escalate in Hawaii, state and county agencies are actively preparing for [continuity of business operations](#) to deal with the potential impact of COVID-19. The goal is to enable ongoing operations during a public health emergency. To address concerns about workers who have travelled to China, DOH developed a list of [frequently asked questions and answers](#) to guide local businesses.

**Hawaii Department of Transportation (HDOT)**

HDOT Airports Division is diligently working to clean and sanitize the facilities, especially common touchpoints like escalator handrails, doorknobs, and elevator buttons at airports statewide. HDOT is currently working to install additional hand sanitizer dispensers at HNL and neighbor island airports, especially in the lobbies and high

**SITUATION IN NUMBERS**  
total and new cases in last 24 hours

**Globally**

83 652 confirmed (1358 new)

**China**

78 961 confirmed (331 new)  
2791 deaths (44 new)

**Outside of China**

4691 confirmed (1027 new)  
51 countries (5 new)  
67 deaths (10 new)

**WHO RISK ASSESSMENT**

|                |           |
|----------------|-----------|
| China          | Very High |
| Regional Level | Very High |
| Global Level   | Very High |

passenger volume areas. Airlines are taking precautions by continually cleaning and sanitizing public areas, equipment and aircrafts.

### **National travel advisories**

The U.S. State Department has issued a [Level 3 Travel Warning Avoid Non-essential Travel for South Korea](#). The U.S. State Department has issued a [level 4 travel advisory](#) asking people not to travel to China due to the COVID-19 outbreak. There is limited access to adequate medical care in affected areas. A level 2 travel advisory has been issued for [Japan](#) and advises people to exercise increased caution especially for older adults and those with medical conditions.

Before you travel, check out Travel Advisories and Alerts for your destination(s) at [www.travel.state.gov/destination](http://www.travel.state.gov/destination). The [State Department](#) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) provide specific advice to travelers on their websites.

### **Preparations for potential risks**

The Department of Health is advising people to take general steps to prepare should the risk level increase in Hawaii for COVID-19.

- Prepare a family emergency plan. A family plan worksheet can be downloaded from: [https://dod.hawaii.gov/hiema/files/2020/02/20200228-Emergency\\_Plan\\_bw.pdf](https://dod.hawaii.gov/hiema/files/2020/02/20200228-Emergency_Plan_bw.pdf).
- If you have a large family in one home, consider what measures you can take to prevent the spread of illness. For a comprehensive list of specific measure you can take, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-prevent-spread.html#precautions>
- Prepare a kit similar to those used during hurricane seasons. These should include a 14 day supply of food and other necessities. For more information, visit this site: <https://health.hawaii.gov/prepare/protect-your-family/prepare-an-emergency-kit/>.
- Set aside an emergency supply of any needed medication and keep a copy of your prescriptions in case you run out of medication.
- Don't forget supplies for your pets.

### **Preventing the spread of misinformation and disease**

The Department of Health is committed to sharing information as it becomes available. People are urged not to spread misinformation or inaccurate statements that are not confirmed, and keep updated and informed on the situation.

Everyone can help prevent the spread of respiratory illness with these everyday actions.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Sign up for public notifications at [health.hawaii.gov/news/covid-19-updates](http://health.hawaii.gov/news/covid-19-updates).

## **Screening of arriving passengers at Daniel K. Inouye International Airport in Honolulu**

Foreign nationals who have traveled to mainland China within the last 14 days are being denied entry into the U.S. This includes not only people with a China passport, but all foreign nationals per [Department of Homeland Security guidance](#). The exception is U.S. citizens, legal permanent U.S. residents or their immediate family.

Enhanced screening procedures are in place at Daniel K. Inouye International Airport to help keep the public and traveling community safe. An additional feature is the non-contact thermal temperature scanners that are used for incoming passengers from China. [Airport passenger screening](#) continues to be conducted by federal authorities from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP). For additional information on the airport screening process [submit a media request to CDC](#).

## **Wearing Masks**

A mask can be effective if you are ill and can prevent the spread of your illness. A mask is not effective to wear when you are well and want to protect yourself from someone who is sick.

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