



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

ELIZABETH A. CHAR, MD
DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 18, 2021

21-076

Department of Health to add probable cases to state's case count & mask survey concludes

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) will add probable COVID-19 cases to the state's case count beginning Wednesday, May 19.

This enhanced metric will reflect a more realistic account of the prevalence of COVID infections in the state.

"People who test positive with an antigen test, but do not confirm infection by taking a PCR test are counted as probable cases," said Acting State Epidemiologist Dr. Sarah Kemble. "Testing technology is evolving and we anticipate using more rapid antigen testing more often as time goes on. Counting probable cases will give us a more complete picture of COVID in our communities."

Kemble and DOH Epidemiologist David Johnston discuss probable cases and the impact they will have on case counts in [The Weekly Dose, a Department of Health Facebook feature](#).

DOH also announces the end of the eight-month mask wearing survey.

"I do think it is an appropriate time," said Dr. Janet Berreman, DOH Kaua'i District Health Officer. "We now have vaccines which are an even stronger protective measure. This doesn't mean we need to stop wearing masks, but a lot of the effort that went into the mask survey is now going into vaccinations," Berreman said.

A great deal of the survey work was done by University of Hawai'i students who have just concluded the 2020-2021 academic year.

"We are very proud of this volunteer effort," said U.H. Assistant Professor Gary Glauberman. "Many of those who volunteered now move on to work as professionals in health care."

Glauber and Berreman discuss the survey's successes and the reason the survey has ended in a [separate edition of The Weekly Dose](#).

###