



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Department of Health reminds the public to be vigilant due to uptick in COVID-19 hospital admission levels**

The Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH) reminds the public to be vigilant due to a steady increase of reported cases of COVID-19 in Hawai'i since June 2023.

As of Monday, Aug. 7, 2023, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that COVID-19 hospital admission levels for both the City and County of Honolulu and Maui County increased from low to medium level.

In the week ending July 29, 2023, the hospital admission rate for Honolulu and Maui counties increased to 10.4 new COVID-19 hospitalizations per 100,000 people. The new cases bumped Hawai'i's hospitalization admission levels from low (<10.0) to medium (10.0-19.9) level.

The recent increase in COVID-19 hospital admission levels parallels COVID-19 hospital admission rates nationwide.

The DOH is reminding members of the public to do their part to protect themselves and others from COVID-19, especially with the recent devastating wildfires on Maui that resulted in an influx of hospitalizations on both Maui and O'ahu.

"The sudden increase in hospitalizations from the tragic wildfires highlights the need to preserve hospital capacity and prevent hospitalizations due to COVID-19," said Health Director Dr. Kenneth Fink. "While most people will have mild illness, taking personal steps can help reduce the risk of severe infection and further spread of the virus."

Currently, scores of displaced residents and visitors alike are being housed at shelters run by the American Red Cross and faith-based organizations on Maui. The Hawai'i Convention Center is also preparing to accommodate hundreds of displaced residents and visitors, and with so many people congregating, masking and physical distancing, to the extent possible and especially if symptomatic, should be emphasized.

The CDC COVID-19 hospital admission levels have replaced COVID-19 community levels as a metric to help individuals and communities decide which preventative actions to take based on the latest information. With hospital admission rates in Hawai'i at medium level, the DOH recommends the following:

- If you or a family member are at high risk for severe illness, wear a high-quality mask or respirator in public indoor spaces.
- If you plan to visit with someone who is at high risk of getting very sick, consider self-testing to detect infection before contact and consider wearing a mask when indoors with them.

The increase in COVID-19 cases and hospital admissions serves as a reminder for everyone to make sure they are up to date with their COVID-19 vaccinations. You can find a location that offers COVID-19 vaccinations at: <https://www.vaccines.gov/search/>.

Additionally, masking continues to be an effective way to protect yourself and others against COVID-19.

If you are exposed to COVID-19, [follow the CDC recommendations for exposure](#). If you develop symptoms or test positive for COVID-19, adhere to the recommended [isolation procedures](#).

If you have COVID-19 and are susceptible to severe illness, especially individuals age 50 and older, those with certain medical conditions, and the immunocompromised, discuss treatment with your health care provider to reduce your risk of hospitalization and death.

For more information, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus>.

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