



The Senate

STATE CAPITOL
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

Thursday, April 9, 2020

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senate President Ronald D. Kouchi
FROM: Senate Special Committee on COVID-19
RE: Senate Special Committee on COVID-19 Report

Dear Senate President,

Please see the attached report prepared following the April 8, 2020, Senate Special Committee on COVID-19 meeting with the following:

- Office of the Lt. Governor
- Department of Human Resources Development
- Hawaii Emergency Management
- Department of Health

Sincerely,

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole
Senator Michelle N. Kidani

Senator Donna Mercado Kim
Senator Sharon Moriwaki
Senator Kurt Fevella

Attachment

Cc: All Senators

Office of the Lieutenant Governor.

Lieutenant Governor Josh Green provided the Committee the following update.

Current Hospital Bed and Equipment Status

- Hospital Beds: 2,773 total
 - Currently in use: 1,304 (47%)
- ICU beds: 338 total
 - Currently in use: 97 (28%)
- Ventilators: 535 total
 - Currently in use: 65 (12%)
- COVID-19 patients: 559 in hospital
 - Five deaths
- PPE – 20 to 30 day supply currently available.
- Lieutenant Governor suggested that having the state bulk purchase masks for HI residents might be worthwhile.
 - The masks could be mailed directly to homes.
 - The costs of the purchase are much lower than the economic costs of continued disruption.
 - Committee commented that masks should be mandatory for everyone entering a public space like markets, picking up take out food in restaurants, and common areas in condos, etc.

Testing

- Testing to Date
 - State of Hawaii: 9,312 tests complete.
 - Oahu: 5,287 tests complete
 - 133 pending
 - 116 positives
 - Kauai: 885 tests complete
 - 50 pending
 - 16 positives
 - Maui: 1,630 tests complete
 - 128 pending
 - 45 positives
 - Hawaii: 1,510
 - 165 pending
 - 16 positives
- State can process 1500 tests in the State daily.
- Out of state testing, turnaround is 4-5 days.
- The state lab can do 250-500 per week.
- Limited availability of rapid testers – need to be reserved for health care workers, first responders, ICUs, etc.

- 15 Abbot Rapid testers (can do 5 min test with 13 min confirmation, but only getting 120 test kits per week).
- Testing costs about \$120/per.
- Private insurers are picking up most of the cost.
- State may need to cover Medicaid recipients.
- HIEMA and Dr. Hankings are gathering data on testing.
- Testing Guidance
 - State is following the federal/CDC guidance to test only symptomatic people.
 - Lieutenant Governor disagrees with tying our procedures too closely to CDC guidance and stated that the CDC had failed us.
 - Lieutenant Governor believes the State needs to do more testing of close contacts.
 - Due in part to HI large number of multi-generational families.
 - Maui Memorial outbreak and Molokai case are using close contact testing.
 - Committee inquired about the need to re-test negative patients
 - Lieutenant Governor stated that they need to be retested at 3 and 6 days to ensure they are genuinely negative.
 - Negative patients can be self-quarantined or otherwise segregated during the retesting process.
 - Close contact testing and retesting is the best practice.
 - It was done in South Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan – best to follow the countries who handled the virus the best.
 - Committee asked if all of these steps are being taken currently.
 - Lieutenant Governor confirmed that they are not.
 - Lieutenant Governor will share testing protocols from those countries with the Committee.
 - Currently re-training DOE nurses to perform testing to help State meet testing needs.
 - Committee urged the need for contact tracing testing.

Prisoner Release

- Lieutenant Governor is not involved in the prisoner release decision.
- Lieutenant Governor expressed concern that prisoners who are released are unlikely to comply with social distancing and self-quarantine rules.
- Prison population could cause a significant surge in positive cases.
- Alternatives to release should be explored.
 - Use hotels or tents to segregate non-violent prisoners.
 - Ensure that all prison employees are given proper PPE to avoid bringing the virus into the facilities and keep everyone safer.

Use rapid testing in the prisons to limit any spread if it starts.

Department of Human Resources Development

Mr. Ryker Wada, Director, provided the Committee the following update.

Redeployment of Workers

- Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) needs 89 employees reassigned or redeployed to the Unemployment Insurance (UI) office to help with increased unemployment filings.
 - Internally, 39 DLIR employees have been reassigned to the UI office to meet immediate needs.
 - The other 50 positions will be filled through a new redeployment process beginning Monday, April 13.
 - DLIR is looking for two types of employees:
 - Call center employees who assist claimants fill out an application and will follow-up on claims.
 - Employees tasked with reviewing claims.
- The Department of Business Economic Development and Tourism has not responded to the Department's request for a list of positions that need to be filled through redeployment.

Process of Redeploying State Workers

- DHRD has identified 706 state employees deemed category 3 (non-essential and non-telework) that can be redeployed to departments/offices requiring additional staff.
 - Category 3 employees include:
 - Department of Accounting and General Services – 46
 - Attorney General's Office – 171
 - Department of Business Economic Development and Tourism – 9
 - Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs – 3
 - Department of Defense – 110
 - Libraries – 241
 - Department of Human Resources and Development – 2
- The Department has requested that all departments submit a list of immediate or anticipated staffing needs.
 - Only DLIR has submitted a detailed list.
- Once a department submits a request for additional staffing, the Department will review and match category three staff to the skillset needed for the position.
- Committee expressed that not all need to have a skillset; some of the responsibility could be as simple as call backs.
- Category 3 staff will be redeployed only if the requesting Department has adequate training, equipment, and social distancing measures available.
- Department noted that they have a good relationship with the unions.
- Committee emphasized their strong displeasure with how delayed the redeployment was taking.

Early Retirements

- Committee inquired about whether the Department was looking into possible early retirement plans for some non-essential positions.
 - State is reviewing the option of offering early retirement for state workers eligible or nearly eligible for retirement.
 - Issues may be the high cost of payouts for saved paid leave and mass vacancies that cannot be filled immediately when the State reopens.

Hawaii Emergency Management Agency

Adjutant General Kenneth Hara, Incident Commander, provided the Committee the following update.

Non-Essential Travel

- The Committee is concerned with recent upticks in visitor arrivals.
- President Trump has said that he would consider the requests to suspend non-essential travel, but that the request must come from the Governor.
 - Committee asked what it will take to get the Governor to sign the letter to President Trump requesting that non-essential travel be halted.
 - Committee expressed frustrations with continuing to ask residents to stay home while allowing visitors into the State.
- MG Hara expressed some reservations around the unintended consequences of stopping travel.
 - Committee requests that those consequences be identified and communicated to the public.
- HIEMA is watching and tracking why people are traveling inter-island.

Process for Arrivals

- Upon arrival, HIEMA will confirm whether the person has a reservation.
 - If there is no reservation, the person can either:
 - Immediately get on the plane and return, or
 - Be arrested on the islands of Kauai, Maui, and Oahu.
- All visitors must have a reservation in a hotel.
 - It is illegal for visitors to stay in vacation rentals.
 - Please call the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs to report any rental violation as well as the county police departments to enforce the quarantine.
- Committee inquired about travelers coming in to stay with family.
 - MG Hara acknowledged that it may be a gap in their process.
- Every visitor gets temperature checked.
 - If they refuse to allow this check, we impose the mandatory quarantine.
 - The temperature check is also mandatory for inter-island.
- Airline crew members are also temperature checked when they arrive at Hawaii's airports.

- If a person has a reservation for less than 14 days, we cannot stop them from leaving before the 14-day period is over under the current supplemental order.
 - The Governor would have to change the second supplemental order to ensure that HIEMA could require those people to return home.
 - Committee believes that the supplemental order must be changed to require a minimum 14-day quarantine location.
 - Committee is aware of the 14-day quarantine period and visitors should be complying with the 14-day quarantine.
- Developing a web-based application that visitors can use to check in with officials 3 times a day.
 - The Committee advised the General that there are 706 state employees who can assist with tracking, even after the high priority needs of the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations have been met.
- HIEMA will be recommending to the Governor eliminating self-quarantine for visitors and mandating quarantine at a State-controlled location.
 - Committee expressed strong concerns about allowing visitors to come into the State and recommend that we charge them for having to use our local resources for quarantine.
- Committee inquired about using rapid testing for quarantined people at the end of the 14-day period.
 - HIEMA explained that supplies of the swabs, reagents, and transport mediums used for the testing kits is limited at this time, and we need to conserve these supplies for the tests that we must do.
 - HIEMA is looking at using rapid testing for quarantined people, but it will depend upon the supply.

Personal Protection Equipment

- When health care workers have a 60-day supply of PPE, then we can allow PPE to be used for other essential workers.
- At this point in time, HIEMA is waiting on federal dollars to increase purchases of PPEs.
- HIEMA is struggling to meet the health care workers' need for PPE.

Enforcement

- It is now easier to arrest these people who refuse to follow the law.
 - We get calls from the hotels if the visitor isn't in the room.
- HIEMA will do more with the police departments to follow through on the quarantine requirements.
 - HIEMA is not targeting locals nor tourists for violations, just people who violate the law.
 - General Hara asked that if you believe that any police department is not complying with current policies, please forward the names and copy of the citation so that it can be investigated.

RIMPAC

- HIEMA is working with the RIMPAC authorities (INDOPACOM) on how to engage in the exercises without risking the health of the people of Hawaii.

Department of Health

Dr. Bruce Anderson, Chair, provided the Committee the following update.

New Cases

- 10-34 new confirmed cases per day.
 - The State has not seen a rapid peak yet.
 - The casualty rate is in line with what the Department expected.
 - Six deaths to date.
- 25 new cases.
 - 15 cases tied to Maui Memorial.
 - The outbreak began in mid-March.
- Maui Memorial may not have been taking all precautions.
 - Little or no requirements for mask use.
 - Not putting masks immediately on all respiratory patients.
 - Not enough PPE for staff.
 - Not identifying symptomatic staff and requiring them to stay home.
 - All close contacts are being asked to quarantine.
- Cruise ship
 - One cruise ship in port – crew only aboard.
 - Six people positive - crew members.
 - Positives quarantined on the ship.
 - Temperature testing others
 - Negatives are being allowed to go directly to the airport and fly home.

Testing and Contact Tracing

- 15,000 tests done since the beginning.
 - Last week 500 test results were still outstanding.
 - Almost all clinical tests being done by private labs.
 - This is the standard way of doing testing.
 - Many tests being sent to the mainland.
 - Committee inquired on the percentage of these test they expect to come back positive.
 - Department stated that they did not know that number at this time.
- We are testing all close contacts for every confirmed case.
- Department following up on every positive case.
 - Travel history.
 - Close contacts.
 - Follow up with close contacts.

- Testing symptomatic close contacts.
 - Staff is able to keep up with the current number of cases (30-40 per day).
 - If there is a surge, the Department will need additional resources and personnel to keep up with the tracing and testing needs.
 - Committee noted this as another potential area to redeploy state workers.
- Hawaii is currently testing more than other states.
 - Higher than South Korea on a per capita basis.
 - On par with Hong Kong and Singapore.
 - New York and Los Angeles did more testing.
 - Hawaii 3rd amongst states.
 - Hawaii is doing 2x as much testing as most states.
- The needed surveillance system in place and will need it in the future.
 - There will be a drop in cases over several incubation periods - with the system we have now we may be able to lift some restrictions.
 - Maybe another month or so for restrictions.
- Long Term Management.
 - COVID-19 is like the flu - it doesn't go away; we will have to learn to live with it.
 - The vaccine will happen, but still a year or more away from a vaccine, so need to focus on long-term management needs.
 - Future – will need to continue aggressive testing, contact tracing, etc. to manage COVID19 over the long-term.

Sentinel Surveillance Program

- The program that randomly tests those who show signs of illness doesn't waste resources on those who are not ill and unlikely to test positive.
 - Tests for the flu and for COVID19 – allows for tracking of both.
 - Random testing means that tracking is done broadly, and pockets that might have otherwise been overlooked can be picked up.
- Some states have stopped doing contact tracing all together and focused on quarantine.
- Program needs:
 - Current staff may need to be tripled from 20 to 60 for the short term to continue the contract tracing components of the program.
 - In the long term, this program may need hundred(s) of staff members to keep the tracing program going and manage COVID19.
- The program would be housed under the Disease Outbreak Control Division of the state Department of Health.

-end of report-