

EDB Committee

From: Sheriann E Yamaguchi <Sheriann.E.Yamaguchi@kp.org>
Sent: Friday, September 25, 2020 1:38 PM
To: EDB Committee; Lesley J. Milner
Cc: Michael A Rembis
Subject: Legislation and Discussion on the Effect of the Coronavirus Pandemic, Rules, Cares Act, and Related Issues (EDB-85)
Attachments: [Untitled].pdf

Dear Chair Rawlins-Fernandez

Please find our attached response to your request dated September 14, 2020 relating to Legislation and Discussion on the Effect of the Coronavirus Pandemic, Rules, Cares Act, and Related Issues (EDB-85).

Please let us know if you have any further questions.

Thank you,
Sheri

Sheri Yamaguchi
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Keani N.W. Rawlins, Chair
Economic Development and Budget Committee
Maui County Council
200 S. High Street
Wailuku, HI 96793

Dear Chairperson Rawlins:

Thank you for your inquiry and for the opportunity to respond. Please find below answers to the Council's questions regarding *Legislation and Discussion on the Effect of the Coronavirus Pandemic, Rules, Cares Act, and Related Issues*.

Thank you to and your colleagues for your ongoing support. If you have any further information needs, please contact my office.

Sincerely,

Michael Rembis
President & CEO
Maui Health



1. Will Maui Health System continue to mass test hospital staff going forward? Why was mass testing not instituted prior to the second group of cases at the hospital?

Mass testing was not previously performed until recently for several reasons. First, until recently, CDC advised against routine testing of individuals without COVID symptoms. Second, it is not the standard of care – no other hospital in Hawaii, or in Kaiser Permanente, is performing routine testing of their staff. Third, before July, the testing capacity needed in order to perform such testing in a timely fashion was not available on Maui.

Based on our experience, and the fact that we now have the needed testing capacity, we plan to test our staff routinely in the coming weeks. If the results are all negative, we will discontinue the mass testing and consider resuming this level of testing should we see an increase in COVID in the community. We must balance the desire for testing with the supply chain of testing supplies and reagents, which remains strained. Additionally, we continue our focus on the safeguards put in place that are necessary in order for the benefits of testing to be more fully seen. This includes screening anyone that enters our facilities, universal masking for all employees and providers, visitors, and patients, and continued education on preventative measures for employees both at work and at home including masking, proper and frequent handwashing, social distancing and avoiding gatherings with anyone outside the immediate household.

2. Are there any discussions with local hotels to assist with quarantine for exposed staff?

Currently Maui Health is participating in the Hotels for Heroes program. This program offers complimentary hotel rooms to our employees who prefer to quarantine away from home. The program has been communicated to all employees through various channels including weekly virtual employee town halls, weekly Emergency Operations Center (EOC) digests, organization-wide broadcast emails, and our internal website. We have a dedicated team member coordinating these stays so that the process is easy for our health care workers.

3. Is Maui Health System providing access to showers and laundry services to help prevent staff from transmitting COVID to their families?

Many hospital departments are equipped with locker rooms with showers that are for employee use. Employees who work in units that do not have showers are able to utilize the showers in another unit that has been assigned to their department.

Hospital laundered scrubs are required to be worn when working in designated COVID isolation areas and are also available to all health care workers, including those who work in non-COVID units, if they prefer to use them. This allows employees to remove their scrubs after their shifts, and leave them at work to be washed, rather than taking them home, which provides further protection for themselves and their loved ones at home.



4. Have you ever run out of Remdesivir resulting in the death of a Maui County resident of COVID-19?

We have never run out of Remdesivir. Healthcare Association of Hawaii (HAH) has always maintained the supply of this medication. Therefore, we can confirm that no Maui resident has lost their life as a result of not having the medication available.

5. Has a patient ever had to give up their Intensive Care Unit bed and ventilator so that another family member has access to them?

There has not been any patient on Maui who has had to give up their ICU bed or a ventilator for another patient to have access to one.

6. Will the COVID pay benefit be extended past September 30, 2020?

We will continue to evaluate this important benefit carefully as we move forward during this pandemic and will share any updates with employees as soon as they are available.

7. Are the reports that COVID-19 is transmitted through aerosols accurate?

CDC guidance recommends use of N95 for AGPs with COVID-positive or PUI patients and Maui Health exceeds that guidance by implementing N95 usage for all AGPs, not just with positive or PUI patients.

For more information on the CDC guidelines and the recent reversal from the CDC that COVID-19 was an airborne transmission, please visit <https://www.wsj.com/articles/coronavirus-can-spread-by-tiny-air-particles-cdc-now-says-11600700364>. There are additional news articles regarding this reversal, if interested.

8. Has a plan been developed for tracking employee childcare and temporary housing expenses once the encumbered funds are released and will a report on these expenditures be provided to the County?

According to our letter from the Mayor's office, these expenses were not approved in the \$3.77M CARES Act funding. During the first COVID surge, we provided temporary benefits such as childcare and temporary shelter/housing for our employees. During this last COVID surge and currently, we are providing temporary benefits for childcare. The Hotels for Heroes program supported by the Hawaii Tourism Authority and Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau is providing hotel rooms for our employees who work with COVID-19 patients and prefer to quarantine away from home.