

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



PANKAJ BHANOT  
DIRECTOR

CATHY BETTS  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

April 13, 2020

My fellow Hawai'i residents:

In times of crisis, we, at the Department of Human Services (DHS) hold strongly to the traditions of 'ohana and the aloha spirit. These values shine through in all that we do and they help guide us in our sense of collective obligation to our communities.

Our state is unique. Deeply embedded in our state constitution is our legal obligation to provide social services to all residents. Article IX, section 3 reminds us of our legal and ethical obligation to provide financial assistance, medical assistance, and social services to those who are in need of these services. Also, the Aloha Spirit statute (section 5-7.5, Hawai'i Revised Statutes) not only mandates we do our work with the spirit of aloha, but it calls upon us, as government officials, to fulfill our duties with a sense of aloha, a sense of mutual collectivity, and a deep moral obligation to care for one another.

We recognize that Hawai'i, along with the rest of the world, is now dealing with uncertain times. The challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic are unprecedented and require bold and creative planning and execution to ensure all DHS essential services are provided in an uninterrupted but modified manner. We continue to provide all services, in a modified manner. We are using telephone, email, and other methods of technological contact, to ensure your safety and our employees' safety. Although we have had to limit our public interaction, we want you to be assured that your health and safety, and the health and safety of your families is our first priority.

We know that we will get through this with a mutual and collective obligation for the people of Hawai'i, and that is what aloha entails. The staff of DHS has risen to the challenge and we are ensuring that our essential functions continue, uninterrupted.

Stay healthy, practice aloha, and continue to care for one another. We are here for you, together, we are 'ohana nui strong.

In deepest gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pankaj Bhanot".

Pankaj Bhanot  
Director