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PRESS RELEASE  
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**Maui County seeks bar closures to stem rising numbers of COVID-19 cases**

With recent double-digit increases in COVID-19 cases, Maui County is seeking approval from Gov. David Ige to temporarily close bars and bar areas within restaurants for two weeks, or until Dec. 26, 2020.

“The Maui District Health Office reported that numerous positive cases are tied to close interactions among patrons in bar settings, and we need to take action to limit the spread of COVID-19 in our community,” Mayor Michael Victorino said. “This is an initial step. We will continue to closely monitor daily case counts, identify sources of spread and take further action as necessary to protect the health and safety of our residents.”

If approved by Gov. Ige, the closure of bars and bar areas within restaurants would begin at 12:01 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 12, 2020. The temporary closure would require bars with certified commercial kitchens to close off the bar counter areas, but they could continue to serve food and alcoholic beverages to patrons.

Recently revised Maui County emergency public health rules address face coverings in restaurants and bars. Customers are now required to wear face coverings at all times, except when actively eating or drinking. Employees are still required to wear proper face coverings at all times.

According to Maui District Health Officer Dr. Lorrin Pang, many of the recent new cases in Maui County were connected to people not wearing face masks and having close personal interactions while eating or drinking at bars.

“As the holidays are nearing, let’s remember to diligently follow COVID-19 safety protocols: wearing face masks, physical distancing, avoiding gatherings and frequently washing hands. Until a vaccine is readily available, these protocols are our best protection against the spread of this virus in our community.”

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