

State to keep mask mandates in place despite CDC guidance

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HONOLULU — Gov. David Ige says the state’s mask mandate will remain in place for now.

Ige urged people to continue wearing masks despite the latest guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention about vaccinated people not having to wear masks in certain outdoor situations.

“We believe that the basic mask mandate is still appropriate, and we won’t

be making changes, or making significant changes, at this time," Ige said.

Ige said it would be difficult to determine who has been vaccinated when it comes to enforcement.

"We don't want to get into the position of saying if you're vaccinated you can do different things than those who are not vaccinated. It does create an enforcement nightmare. We wouldn't be able to determine who is vaccinated and who's not," Ige said.

Some people at a beach park agreed.

"It's great that he's not going to change it because how can you tell if somebody's vaccinated or not?" said Terry Kakazu. "For my own protection I'm gonna wear it anyway."

Ige believes masks have helped keep the virus in check in the state.

"Hawaii continues to have amongst the lowest per capita infection rates and fatality rates in the country," said Ige. "I do believe that our mask mandate is part of that success."

Honolulu police are still enforcing rules on Oahu. A police spokeswoman said last week the department issued approximately 130 citations and arrests for mask violations.

"What are we gonna do, put a 'V' on everybody's arm to let everybody know you're the vaccinated one?" asked beachgoer Claire Nakamua-Rochon.

Some think the CDC guidelines make more sense.

"If you're vaccinated and you're outside and you're social distancing, you shouldn't have to wear a mask. All you have to be is respectful. If you come

near anybody, just put your mask on," said Hoi Young, who was taking a walk in Honolulu.

"You can hold it. But I don't think you should have to wear a mask," he added.