

Hawaii considering proof of COVID-19 vaccination for restaurants, bars and gyms

By [Sophie Cocke](#) Today Updated 2:05 pm



Hawaii Lt. Gov. Josh Green says the state is considering a vaccination verification program, similar to San Francisco and New York City, which would require people to show proof of vaccination against COVID-19 in order to enter restaurants, bars, gyms and other indoor establishments.

He said such a policy could be two to three weeks away.

"We are working up that policy and giving it as an option to the governor," Green [told Spotlight Hawaii](#) this morning.

A vaccine verification program for businesses is among a number of options Green said the governor and county mayors are considering as the highly contagious delta variant causes COVID-19 cases to surge throughout the islands and influx of patients strains hospitals. Green said that imposing a curfew to relieve pressure on emergency rooms is one idea, but he doubts it will happen.

While a portion of the public is pushing for more stringent measures to control the spread of the virus, Green said the policy decisions are complicated.

"I know there are people out there who say, "Look, just shut it all down,"" said Green. "But that's a pretty difficult thing to do when suddenly a family who got vaccinated won't be able to pay their rent, won't be able to pay their mortgage, won't be able to pay for groceries for their children, may not have extra unemployment protection."

Green said it's difficult to punish everyone because 17% of residents who are eligible to get the COVID-19 vaccine, still haven't gotten it. The vaccine is available to anyone who is age 12 and older. But if case numbers can't be controlled or there are outbreaks in schools, Green said the state will likely have to look at shutdowns.

As of this morning, there were 381 people hospitalized with COVID, throughout the state, 90% of whom are unvaccinated, said Green. On July 1, before the delta variant of the coronavirus caused a spike in cases, there were just 40 people hospitalized with the virus, according to state data.

Green said for now it looks like Hawaii's hospitals will be able to absorb the

increase in COVID patients. There are 3,200 hospital beds throughout the state, about 2,200 of which are currently staffed. The state is in the midst of bringing in more than 500 relief workers, including critical care nurses and respiratory technicians, to assist with the surge in patients, which will allow the hospitals to open up more beds.

Green said the state also has a variety of options if capacity is eventually outstripped, including turning hotels into makeshift hospitals, using the National Guard to set up portable hospitals and using the Hawaii Convention Center for patients.

On the more extreme end of options is building a new facility, which would cost about \$300 million. "That would be if we had months and months of high levels in the hospital and our hospital facilities couldn't survive," he said.