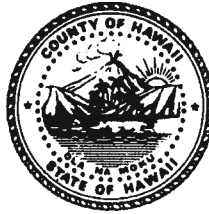


Harry Kim
Mayor



Roy Takemoto
Managing Director

Barbara J. Kossow
Deputy Managing Director

County of Hawai'i
Office of the Mayor

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September 21, 2020

Honorable David Y. Ige
Governor, State of Hawai'i
Executive Chambers
415 S. Beretania St., 5th Floor
Honolulu, HI 96813

Sent via email: David.Y.Ige@hawaii.gov

Dear Governor Ige,

RE: Oversight of Yukio Okutsu State Veterans Home by Tiger Team

I am writing to demand the removal of Avalon Health Care (Avalon) as the manager of Yukio Okutsu State Veterans Home (Veterans Home) in Hilo. On Saturday, September 12, 2020, I made the demand to suspend Avalon from further administration of the Veterans Home. I have no confidence and trust in Avalon.

In only a short period of time, approximately a one (1) month period, twenty-four (24) veterans from the Yukio Okutsu State Veterans Home died with positive test results for COVID-19. This is tragic, and unacceptable.

In the Yukio Okutsu State Veterans Home Onsite Assessment Team Briefing, Department of Veterans Affairs, prepared September 12, 2020, ("Report") it stated, amongst others, significant deficiencies that caused the rapid spread of COVID:

- Residents not cohorted based on COVID status.
- Lack of adequate infection control.

In regards to the lack of adequate infection control, the Report stated:

There was very little evidence of proactive preparation/planning for COVID. Many practices observed seemed as if they were a result of recent changes. Even though these are improvements, these are things that should have been in

place from the pandemic onset and a major contributing factor towards the rapid spread. A basic understanding of segregation and workflow seemed to be lacking even approximately three weeks after first positive case.

The Tiger Team is now in Hilo and fully capable in managing the Veterans Home until other arrangements are finalized.

Because of Avalon's failures, Avalon must be immediately removed from further administration of the Veterans home. Please contact me to discuss how we will proceed in having the Tiger Team immediately manage and supervise the operations at the Yukio Okutsu State Veterans Home.

Sincerely,



HARRY KIM
Mayor

c: Doreen Sommers, Associate Director, Patient Care Services/Nurse Executive,
Erie Veterans Affairs Medical Center