

# VOICE OF BUSINESS



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## WITH INTERNATIONAL VISITOR MARKET LAGGING, VACCINE PASSPORT PROGRAM BRINGS HOPE

With the legislative session now officially over, and multiple bills headed to the governor's desk, focus again turns to the state's ongoing pandemic response. Projections indicate the Oahu international visitor market isn't expected to fully recover until 2024. Which means the thousands of businesses who depend on at least a part of their revenue from tourism will need to tighten their belts as we await the revenue from tourism to return. This places more emphasis on doing everything we can to help businesses get back some of what's been lost in multiple months of shutdowns and restrictions.

The announcement of Governor Ige's plan to allow for inter-island residents to travel through a vaccine passport program comes at an opportune time for many, including local businesses that operate on multiple islands, residents traveling to see their friends and loved ones, and families taking a much-



**Sherry Menor-McNamara**  
President & CEO

needed staycation to support our local economy. As Hawaii continues to stay on track to inoculate millions of residents and nationally reaching millions more, a vaccine passport program will serve to complement the existing Safe Travels program of requiring a 10-day mandatory self-quarantine and pre-travel testing option.

Future development of the Safe Travels program, system, and processes along with the vaccine passport could pave the way for domestic travel in the summer and then international travelers when health officials

say it is safe to do so.

A thoughtful idea, stemming from a conversation with a legislator highlighted that the size and scope of ideas should not be limited to short term solutions, but also the ability to adapt by broadening and integrating the vaccination passport for other non-travel uses such as accommodations, hotels, or restaurants. For instance, eating in a restaurant and having to write your name and contact information on a piece of paper for contract tracing could be a thing of the past by allowing businesses to scan your vaccine passport. This is just one of many possibilities but, of course, the devil is in the details. The point is, we are forced to reinvent how we do business, and this is an opportunity to explore new ideas, develop podcasts and webinars on trends and marketing opportunities, and augment best-practices unique to Hawaii.

### COC TESTIMONIAL



The Chamber has provided incredible leadership in helping the business community navigate the complexities of the Pandemic. Providing incredible opportunities to share ideas, brainstorm and

encourage participation in the formulation of policy is such an amazing benefit! The chamber has given us a voice at the table. The Chamber is steadfast in their fight for what we in the business community need to survive and eventually thrive which is something I sincerely admire and appreciate! Despite the challenges of the Pandemic in addition to all I have previously mentioned, the Chamber remains committed to providing educational opportunities via Newsletters, Emails, or their Focus On series and have now even created a Podcast whose purpose is to showcase local businesses and share ideas to help us all succeed! The Chamber is leading the way in fostering the ideas of partnership and teamwork to help all of Hawaii's Businesses enjoy a brightening future!

**Monty Pereira**  
GM & Sales and Marketing Director  
Watanabe Floral, Inc.



## Q & A

### Ask the Expert

**Alamelu Ramamurthi, MD**  
Cardiac Electrophysiologist



**Alamelu Ramamurthi, MD**  
Cardiac Electrophysiologist  
Queen's Heart Institute

**Q: What is atrial fibrillation?**

**A:** Atrial fibrillation is an abnormal heart rhythm that occurs due to disorganized electrical firing in the top chambers of the heart. It causes your heart rhythm to be irregular and fast. Due to this rhythm, the heart chambers are unable to squeeze effectively. As a result, there's a risk of a blood clot forming in the heart, which in turn can cause a stroke. Sometimes, untreated atrial fibrillation can decrease the pumping function of the heart.

**Q: What are the symptoms of atrial fibrillation?**

**A:** Symptoms vary and may include heart racing, shortness of breath, chest pain, swelling of the legs, lightheadedness and occasionally loss of consciousness. Some people may experience an inability to exercise or exert themselves as they normally would.

**Q: How is it treated?**

**A:** Treatment may include controlling a fast heart rate (rate control), or preventing atrial fibrillation from occurring altogether (rhythm control). "Rate control" is achieved with the use of medications, and sometimes may require implantation of a pacemaker to prevent the heart rate from periodically becoming too slow. "Rhythm control" may involve specialized cardiac procedures such as ablation and/or medications, and consultation with a Cardiac Electrophysiologist is important when considering these options. Weight loss, abstinence from alcohol and treatment of sleep apnea form the foundation of a successful outcome in the treatment of atrial fibrillation. An equally important aspect of treatment is stroke prevention, which is often accomplished with medications that thin the blood.

To learn more about the Queen's Heart Institute's comprehensive cardiac services, visit [www.queens.org/heart](http://www.queens.org/heart).

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