**Impact of COVID-19 Restrictions on Hawaii Tourism: Working Notes**

Audience:

* Hawaii State Government
  + Quick decisions had to be made as COVID started to spread. How did those decisions impact Hawaii tourism $ coming into Hawaii and taxes going to the State?
  + Now that we are 18+ months in, can we learn anything from the data that might impact decision on how/when to completely re-open the islands
  + Governor Ige stated on xx/xx/xx that all travel restrictions and the Hawaii Safe Travels Program would cease as soon as the state reached a 70% vaccination rate
    - On xx/xx/xx, this decision was reversed in light of impact from the Delta Variant
    - At this point, there is no measure by which we can know when Hawaii will fully re-open and drop travel restrictions
  + In looking at the data in hindsight, can we determine which measures helped the most in terms of reducing COVID transmission and the cost of those measures. Were there any measures that ‘went too far’ in the sense that the cost endured was not justified by the risk.
* Residents of Hawaii
  + Hawaii has always been a place where people join together for the common good. This is one of the reasons that Hawaii has been able to achieve such a high vaccination rate (over 70%) at this time. But, also, pressure to achieve this rate so that Hawaii’s economy can get back to normal.
  + Hawaii residents desperately want their economy to get back to normal. In the wake of high unemployment rates and dramatic decline in income to the state, a lot of residents are left wondering if Hawaii went too far w/it’s restrictions that impacted Tourism.
  + Many residents of Hawaii are also investors in Hawaii’s Tourism or have a financial interest in Tourism… especially the elderly who rely on income from short-term rental properties to pay for assisted living, nursing home care, and medical bills.
* Travelers to Hawaii
  + There’s no doubt that many people love to travel to Hawaii and had to alter their plans around COVID. Generally speaking, though, this is a minor inconvenience in the scope of things.
  + The travelers to Hawaii that were impacted the most are former residents w/family on the islands. No other state has made it virtually impossible to visit and for so long. For those of us w/aging parents in Hawaii, we were constantly reading the proclamations to figure out when/if we could ever come to visit our family.

Objectives:

* This study aims to shed light on both the positive and negative impacts resulting from the COVID restrictions that were put in place that effect Travelers and Hawaii Tourism.
* This study can **NOT** conclusively answer the question… did Hawaii go to Far?... because it’s impossible to put a price on human life. But, it can hopefully show us which measures were more effective than other measures (had a better cost/benefit balance).
* One question we may want to also consider is… in light of the cost to Hawaii’s Economy, would it have made better financial sense to increase hospital capacity and staffing in lieu of stricter travel restrictions… given that the tourism $ lost was so incredibly high.
* Depending on EDA, we might want to explore further as to whether or not too much focus was put on traveler restriction monitoring/compliance vs community restriction monitoring/compliance. One could argue that Hawaii’s history creates an underlying ‘fear of the traveler’ in some respect… a knee jerk response to tragedies in Hawaii’s past that were due to outsiders. In reality, was the biggest threat of COVID to Hawaii actually the community culture/traditions of Hawaii (multi-gen housing, large family gatherings, ride-sharing, social norms)… things that are more difficult to change from within… creating a tendency to want to control what’s coming from the outside instead.

Presentation… Things to mention in no particular order:

* The reality of Quarantine in Hawaii… taken very seriously… one use key cards ensuring that visitors can not leave their hotel room for the duration of quarantine. $5000 and up to 1 yr in jail for violation of quarantine and other COVID restrictions. Active monitoring w/host financial/legal responsibility.
* The importance of Tourism to Hawaii’s Economy… Tourism is THE business of Hawaii. This study is not about Public Policy or Politics. It is about **how the business of Tourism was managed by Hawaii during COVID19**.

Data:

The primary sources of data to be used for this study are as follows:

* Hawaii COVID Rules Table
  + The most labor intensive part of this project is to review all COVID-related State Proclamations and manually extract out those parts that impact Tourism in order to create a data table with timeline as to when each rule went into effect and, if lifted, when it was lifted.
  + This is the table that will be used to ‘overlay’ the timing of various restrictions w/visitor data and covid data to determine how much impact we can see from the restrictions over time.
* Visitor Data
  + Extracted from the Hawaii Tourism Data Warehouse
* COVID Data
  + Categorizes daily reported COVID cases into one of 3 categories:
    - Community
    - Travel-Related (Resident)
    - Travel-Related (Non-Resident)
      * Preliminary EDA shows that Hawaii increased restrictions on Tourism even when Travel-Related(Non-Resident) cases were already extremely low at 1% and not rising.

Analysis: