Daily life has changed dramatically for us. We have seen the COVID-19 pandemic grow from a single location to across the globe.

In our islands, we have gone from one case to dozens. The state and county governments have now imposed mandates that call for us to stay at home and restrict our movements. Our lives, relationships and livelihoods have been affected, and we must take all of this into consideration as we deal with this crisis.

From the hospitality industry’s perspective, restaurants and other food service establishments were among the first to be affected when they were asked to suspend in-house dining operations and restrict their long-standing business models to drive-thru, delivery or curbside pickup.

Many of our local business owners were forced to reckon with difficult questions. How do they keep their businesses afloat? Can they take care of their employees during the shutdown?

The vast majority of these businesses recognized the impact and immediately changed their business models, at least for the foreseeable future.

Hawaii’s hotels anticipated these same challenges. Increasing numbers of hotels painstakingly prepared to suspend operations and embark on a campaign to ask visitors to respect our mandates and not to visit Hawaii now. The net result is that this proactive crusade against COVID-19 has resulted in a monumental decrease in visitor arrivals, unlike anything we have ever experienced in the state’s history. All of this indicates that we are achieving what we set out to do.

With state and county directives to remain in our homes as much as possible, each of us is left to grapple with the same questions that our industry has already prepared. We must decide what is more important: our personal comforts or the health of our community.

This is our call to action. Please, to the greatest extent possible, abide by our state and county measures and remain home as much as you can. Practice social distancing. Put public wellness above personal priorities.

Considering these circumstances, it is clear that our wisest course of action is to follow the best health and medical advice and remain at home. It is imperative that we as a community pull together to stamp out COVID-19 in Hawaii as soon as possible, and this will only be accomplished if we all adjust our daily lifestyles and put each other’s health above all else.

Failure to do so will cause irreparable harm and suffering to our families and loved ones, and delay the long road to recovery. Let’s put our shoulder to the wheel, push along and pray fervently that we will be back stronger than ever!