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## **Filipino Community Center Expanding FilCom CARES COVID Vaccination Program Statewide with \$50,000 Donation from Nareit Hawaii**

**HONOLULU – Apr. 8, 2021** – “People trust the Filipino Community Center and are comfortable coming here. When they see other people coming to us to get vaccinated, they think ‘we need to do that, too.’”

That was the message of Executive Director Donnie Juan at the FilCom CARES COVID vaccination drive today at the Filipino Community Center in Waipahu, where more than 250 residents were vaccinated.

Today’s event was highlighted by the presentation of a \$50,000 check from Nareit Hawaii to the Filipino Community Center to help the nonprofit charitable organization expand its vaccination program on Oahu and the neighbor islands. Juan said the donation from Nareit Hawaii will help the Filipino Community Center to reach more residents, especially those within the Filipino and Pacific Islander communities, who have shown a reluctance to get the COVID vaccine.

Juan commented, “This generous donation from Nareit Hawaii will allow us to expand the reach of our message to correct disinformation about the COVID vaccine and to overcome communication obstacles, particularly within the older generation, that are keeping many residents from getting vaccinated. We will also be collaborating with partners in other communities throughout the state to encourage more people to get vaccinated and protect their health.”

Nareit Hawaii Executive Director Gladys Quinto Marrone said, “There is a great need to get our most vulnerable residents protected from COVID and our REIT members wanted to step forward to help out. Nareit Hawaii’s donation to the Filipino Community Center is inspired by unity, supporting one another, and moving everyone forward together to beat COVID. We applaud the FilCom CARES COVID vaccination program and how it is keeping families healthy and strengthening our communities.”

Several elected officials at the federal, state and county levels attended today’s check presentation ceremony to show their support for the efforts being made by the Filipino Community Center. Taking part were U.S. Congressman Ed Case, State Senator Clarence Nishihara (Senate District 17), State Senator Bennette Misalucha (Senate District 16), State Representative Henry Aquino (House District 38), State Representative Ty Cullen (House District 39), State Representative Ryan Yamane (House District 37), and Honolulu City Council Member Radiant Cordero (District 7).

Research data published by the Hawaii State Department of Health show that Filipino and Pacific Islander residents have contracted COVID at a higher rate than other ethnic groups in Hawaii, but are among the lowest to be vaccinated.

Other partners supporting the FilCom CARES program include the Hawaii State Department of Health, Kaiser Permanente, the Kalihi-Palama Center, and Project Vision.

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Initiated in 1991, the Filipino Community Center is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization housed in a three-story structure of 50,000 square feet on two acres in Waipahu. It is the largest Filipino Community Center outside of the Philippines. The Center's mission is to provide social, economic and education services, and to promote and perpetuate Filipino culture and customs in the state of Hawaii. For more information, visit [filcom.org/center/](http://filcom.org/center/).

Nareit Hawaii represents the interests of REITs in Hawaii and their participation in civic, community, and policy initiatives to benefit residents statewide, while also supporting community and charitable organizations that address social issues of importance. REITs are long-term property holders that own, renovate and manage affordable housing projects, commercial buildings, medical facilities, shopping centers, cell phone towers, public storage facilities, and hotels in Hawaii. For more information about Nareit Hawaii and REITs in Hawaii, please visit [www.nareithawaii.com](http://www.nareithawaii.com).

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