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Update on Judiciary Actions in Light of COVID-19

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HONOLULU — The Hawaii State Judiciary is focused on ensuring the safety of all court users and Judiciary personnel in response to the COVID-19 virus. Judiciary representatives are working collaboratively with the Department of Health and other state agencies to ensure our response is timely and appropriate according to the law.

“While there are currently no cases in Hawaii, we know there is potential for COVID-19 to affect our court operations,” said Chief Justice Mark E. Recktenwald. “Our leadership team has been meeting regularly to address immediate concerns and plan for anticipated disruption should the situation in Hawaii change.”

The Judiciary is taking specific steps to address the situation. First, if an individual is currently in self-quarantine for any reason due to possible COVID-19 exposure and will not be cleared by the Department of Health to resume normal activities before they are required to report to court for a case, jury duty, or any court services, they should contact:

First Circuit (Oahu): 808-539-4400
Second Circuit (Maui County): 808-244-2929
Third Circuit (Hawaii Island): 808-961-7440
Fifth Circuit (Kauai): 808-482-2308

Upon verification by the DOH of an individual’s self-monitoring status, the matter may be handled in an alternative manner or postponed by a judge until they are cleared to appear.

Second, the Judiciary is taking steps to reduce the need for inter-island travel by attorneys and self-represented litigants during this time. Those scheduled to appear on a different island than the one on which they live may ask to appear telephonically or by video conference call as permitted by court rules. Requests for telephonic appearances by attorneys or self-represented litigants who would otherwise need to travel inter-island will be liberally granted while the COVID-19 situation is ongoing.

The Judiciary will continue to monitor the effects of COVID-19 on court operations, take any necessary steps to ensure the health and safety of our community, and communicate with the public as the situation develops.

Please refer to the Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention websites for additional information about the current status of COVID-19 in Hawaii and worldwide, in addition to steps that can be taken to prevent or slow the spread of respiratory illness in our community. Information is available here:

https://health.hawaii.gov/docd/advisories/novel-coronavirus-2019/ (https://health.hawaii.gov/docd/advisories/novel-coronavirus-2019/)
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html)

For more information, contact the Communications and Community Relations Office at 808-539-4909 or via email at **pao@courts.hawaii.gov (mailto:pao@courts.hawaii.gov)**.

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