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SCMF-20-0000152

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF HAWAI‘I

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In the Matter of the Judiciary’s Response  
to the COVID-19 Outbreak

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ORDER DIRECTING COURTHOUSE CLOSURES  
(By: Recktenwald, C.J.)

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve, and the Judiciary is continuing to take steps to ensure the safety of our community. The Order issued on March 16, 2020 in SCMF-20-0000152 (“March 16, 2020 Order”) limited all in-person appearances for civil, family, and, to the extent possible, criminal dockets in Hawai‘i state courts. Pursuant to the March 16, 2020 Order, the Chief Judges of each circuit have issued orders adjusting court operations as warranted to address the urgent and rapidly evolving public health conditions (“local orders”). On March 17, 2020, Governor David Ige announced statewide actions to slow the spread of COVID-19, which included a directive to avoid gatherings of more than ten people, consistent with federal recommendations. NOW, THEREFORE,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that all judiciary facilities, including courthouses, shall be closed to the public beginning on March 23, 2020 through April 30, 2020. Only persons having official court business may enter judiciary facilities. Those with official court business include:

- Parties, attorneys, witnesses, domestic violence advocates, guardians ad litem, interpreters, or any other person who must appear in-person as authorized by the March 16, 2020 Order or by local order
- Individuals who need to file documents with the court and who are unable to electronically file
- Individuals who request to watch a specific public proceeding then occurring

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that any person who enters judiciary facilities pursuant to this Order shall minimize their time within the facility to the extent reasonably possible. This shall include going directly to the room, division, or area of the facility in which their presence is required and leaving immediately after their official business is complete. Any member of the public who enters judiciary facilities must, while therein, maintain six feet between themselves and any other person to the extent feasible, including within courtrooms.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the chief judges of each circuit may issue orders and adjust court operations as necessary to minimize the number of people entering judiciary facilities,

including but not limited to establishing secure drop-boxes for document filing to replace current in-person filing procedures.

IT IS FINALLY ORDERED that nothing contained herein shall modify the restrictions set forth in the March 16, 2020 Order, which, inter alia, prohibit individuals from entering judiciary facilities if they have a fever, cough, or other respiratory symptoms; traveled outside Hawai'i in the past 14 days; or has had close prolonged contact with a person who has or is suspected to have COVID-19.

DATED: Honolulu, Hawai'i, March 20, 2020.

/s/ Mark E. Recktenwald  
Chief Justice

