



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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**Hawai'i State Department of Health to Hold
Public Informational Meetings on Cesspools
in Makawao in Upcountry Maui, and Kahalu'u in Windward O'ahu**

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i State Department of Health will hold two public informational meetings this month to explain the impact cesspools are having on drinking water and sensitive surface waters. The meetings will also provide information on possible solutions to the cesspools.

Last month, the health department submitted a report on cesspools to the legislature. Based on an analysis of existing cesspool data and water quality samples collected over the past several months, the health department identified 14 priority areas statewide where cesspools are beginning to affect drinking water, streams or beaches. The public informational meetings will be held at the two highest priority areas, Makawao in Upcountry Maui and Kahalu'u in Windward O'ahu, on the following dates and times:

- **Makawao, Maui**
Tuesday, January 9, 2018, 6 – 8 p.m.
Eddie Tam Memorial Center
931 Makawao Ave., Makawao, HI 96768

- **Kahalu'u, Oahu**
Friday, January 12, 2018, 6 – 8 p.m.
Kualoa-He'eia Ecumenical Youth (KEY) Project
47-200 Waihe'e Road, Kaneohe, Hawai'i 96744

Upcountry Maui has 7,400 cesspools that are a potential threat to drinking water and Kahalu'u

has 740 cesspools, which are also putting human health at risk and affecting sensitive waters in the area. There is a total of 43,000 residential cesspools statewide that are a priority to be replaced.

A number of representatives from the Hawai'i Department of Health will participate in the informational meetings: Dr. Virginia Pressler, health director; Keith Kawaoka, deputy director of environmental health; Sina Pruder, chief, wastewater branch; Joanna Seto, chief, safe drinking water branch; Robert Whittier, a hydrogeologist in the safe drinking water branch; and Barbara Brooks, a toxicologist with the hazard evaluation and emergency response program.

“Although the drinking water in these two areas is safe, we are initiating these important conversations with the community so that we can prevent cesspools from reaching the point where they have a much more serious impact on human health and the environment, including drinking waters, surface waters, beaches and coral habitats,” said Keith Kawaoka, the Department of Health’s deputy director of environmental health. “As a community, we all need to be proactive and begin to explore possible solutions together.”

In last year’s legislative session, legislators passed a bill to address the cesspool situation, and the bill was subsequently signed into law by Gov. David Ige in July 2017. Act 125 requires all cesspools in the state to be upgraded, converted or connected to the sewer system before 2050 unless they are exempted. The law also broadens eligibility criteria for tax credits to offset the costs for homeowners.

Public informational meeting dates and locations for Hawai'i Island and Kaua'i are being finalized. The public may direct any questions to the Hawai'i Department of Health's [Wastewater Branch](#) at (808) 586-4294.

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