



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

**News Release**

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GOVERNOR

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**DOH SUSPENDS PERMIT FOR SEKIYA'S RESTAURANT;  
REMEDIES UNDERWAY**

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH) today met with the owners and management for Sekiya's Restaurant and Delicatessen located at 2746 Kaimuki Avenue in Honolulu to confirm additional measures taking place to ensure food safety and sanitation at the restaurant. The DOH issued a Notice of Permit Suspension to the restaurant effective February 23, 2008. The restaurant closed to conduct intensive prevention measures.

In December 2007, the DOH confirmed six related cases of illness caused by the bacteria *E. coli* O157:H7 and one case in February 2008. All have recovered from their illnesses. An investigation concluded that all seven individuals had a history of consuming food prepared at Sekiya's restaurant in Kaimuki.

Following the confirmation of *E. coli* O157:H7 cases in December, DOH sanitarians inspected Sekiya's restaurant and worked with management to eliminate practices that may have contributed to the illnesses. Follow-up inspections within three days of the initial investigation revealed that all major violations had been corrected. Environmental samples were collected during the follow-up inspections, and all samples have turned up negative for *E. coli* O157:H7 and other disease causing bacteria after undergoing testing at the State Laboratory.

Although all major health code concerns had been corrected before the restaurant's closing last weekend, the occurrence of a case more than five weeks after the initial cluster of illnesses led DOH to conclude there was still potential for the bacteria to be present in the establishment. Restaurant operations have been suspended temporarily while more extensive sanitation

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measures are taken. The DOH is also continuing to investigate the exact source of the E. coli O157:H7 bacteria.

Sekiya's has been fully cooperating with the DOH and will remain closed while an intensive mitigation plan developed together with the DOH is fully implemented. The restaurant owners are committed to assuring the health of their customers and have hired a private food safety consultant to assist them in taking the following measures to prevent any future problems:

- 1) Removal of all food products and supplies.
- 2) Complete disinfection and cleaning of the entire establishment.
- 3) Management and employees will engage in a comprehensive course of study on food safety via classes provided by the DOH.
- 4) Owners will outline active managerial controls to ensure that the provisions of the DOH's food code are adhered to.

The DOH will continue its investigation to assure the public that this incident has been fully examined and contained. Special remedial measures have been developed together with Sekiya's food safety consultant and, with Sekiya's continued cooperation and verification by DOH of these measures being effectively implemented; Sekiya's permit will be reinstated.

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