



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR

CHIYOME LEINAALA FUKINO M.D.
DIRECTOR
Phone: (808) 586-4410
Fax: (808) 586-4444

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**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH OFFERS FLU VACCINATIONS IN THREE
MILILANI ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

HONOLULU - The Hawaii State Department of Health and Department of Education have partnered to promote flu vaccination in Hawaii. For the first time ever, DOH is offering flu vaccinations through a pilot assessment to elementary students in a group of Hawaii's public schools. The goal of this pilot project is to promote flu vaccination among Hawaii's children as well as adults by improving community awareness.

The flu is highly contagious, and people who have it can spread it to others even before they have symptoms. School-aged children are particularly susceptible to the flu. Studies show children are much more likely than adults to get influenza. School-aged children are also likely to spread the virus to others in their home and community.

Three Mililani elementary schools (Mililani Uka Elementary, Mililani Waena Elementary and Mililani Mauka Elementary) are participating in the project. During the school day, students will be offered the FluMist™ at Mililani Uka, flu shots at Mililani Waena and will have a choice between either the FluMist™ or a flu shot at Mililani Mauka. The data collected will be used to determine the potential for effective school-based flu vaccination of school age children. The DOH conducted informative sessions with parents earlier in the month and received parental consent forms for each child to be vaccinated.

Prior to receiving the vaccinations in the schools, students will be shown a brief informative video, created by the DOH, explaining what flu is and what they can do to protect themselves from catching it. The goal is to eventually make the video available to all of Hawaii's public schools to improve education and awareness about flu and the importance of vaccination.

By far, the single best way to prevent the flu is for everyone, especially people at high risk for serious complications from the flu, to get a vaccination each year. However, there are other good health habits that can help prevent the flu. These are:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.
- If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.
- Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

Persons interested in getting a flu vaccination should talk to their doctor or call 2-1-1 to find a vaccination clinic in their neighborhood.

For additional information about the flu, visit www.vaxhawaii.com.

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For more information contact:
Kurt Tsue
Communications Office
Telephone: (808) 586-4402

Janice Okubo
Communications Office
Telephone: (808) 586-4442