



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

**News Release**

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GOVERNOR

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**DOH WRAPS UP FIRST-EVER STOP FLU AT SCHOOL VACCINATION CLINICS FOR 2007-2008 FLU SEASON**

**More than 60,000 Hawai'i Keiki Vaccinated**

**HONOLULU** – The Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH), in collaboration with public and private schools, health care providers, pediatric associations, and federal partners, successfully conducted Hawai'i's first-ever statewide childhood flu vaccination program during the 2007-2008 flu season. More than 60,000 of Hawai'i's elementary and middle school students were vaccinated against the flu for free through the *Protect Hawai'i's Keiki: Stop Flu At School* program; this represents more than 40 percent of all children ages 5-13 in the state. About 9,000 teachers and school staff were also vaccinated.

"Getting the flu vaccine each year is our best protection against the flu, it's everyone's kuleana," said state Health Director Dr. Chiyome Leinaala Fukino. "We would like to thank everyone who participated in this program, especially Hawai'i's schoolchildren and their parents and guardians. This was a great example of the state teaming with educators and health care providers to build a healthier community."

More than 600 school-based clinics were coordinated and held at about 340 public and private schools across the state.

"Keeping kids and faculty healthy and in school to reach academic goals remains a top priority," said Schools Superintendent Patricia Hamamoto. "I would highly encourage schools and families to participate in this voluntary program again."

More

“We intend to continue the *Stop Flu At School* program during the next flu season,” said State Epidemiologist Dr. Paul Effler. “We are actively seeking funding to keep this successful program going. We believe offering free flu vaccination clinics to Hawai`i’s schoolchildren helps keep them healthy while lowering rates of illness in their families during flu season.”

The plan for next year’s program is to again reach out to children 5-13 years-old. Studies show school-age children have very high rates of flu illness and are more likely to spread it to family members than almost any other group.

*Stop Flu At School* partners included the Hawai`i State Department of Health, Hawai`i State Department of Education, Hawai`i Association of Independent Schools, and Hawai`i Catholic Schools with support from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Hawai`i chapters of the American Academy of Pediatrics and Academy of Family Physicians, Kaiser Permanente, and the Hawai`i Medical Service Association (HMSA).

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