



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

### News Release

**LINDA LINGLE**  
GOVERNOR

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### **STOP FLU AT SCHOOL VACCINATION CLINICS BEGIN**

#### **Participating K-8<sup>th</sup> Graders Help Protect the Community**

**HONOLULU** – Just in time for the flu season, the Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH) this week began administering free flu vaccine to thousands of Hawai'i elementary and middle school students statewide through the *Protect Hawai'i's Keiki: Stop Flu At School* program. Three hundred thirty-eight school clinics are scheduled between October and December 2008.

More than 60,000 children are signed up to receive flu vaccine this fall through the program. Of participating students, approximately 53,000 attend public schools. Additionally, close to 7,000 teachers and school staff will receive the flu vaccine, pushing the total number of vaccinations near 70,000.

"We hope this program helps to remind everyone about the importance of getting their seasonal flu vaccine this year," said Health Director Dr. Chiyome Leinaala Fukino. "The students and faculty participating in this program are a great example for all of us. Getting the flu vaccine is everyone's best protection against the flu."

"Following the success of last year's program, we are excited to be offering the free flu vaccine to elementary and middle school students at their schools," said Patricia Hamamoto, superintendent of Hawai'i public schools. "We anticipate that participation in the *Stop Flu at School* program will translate into fewer sick days and more quality learning time in the classroom."

More

According to recent studies, school children vaccinated against flu have fewer illnesses, fewer absences from school, and lower rates of illness in their families during flu season, compared with unvaccinated children.

“We are encouraged so many parents and caregivers are taking advantage of this program so we can counter one of the biggest sources of flu transmission in our communities,” said State Epidemiologist Dr. Sarah Y. Park. “Our goal is to continue to build on this program in order to make our communities stronger and healthier.”

*Stop Flu at School* partners include 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 American Academy of Family Physicians, the Hawai'i Medical Reserve Corps, the University of Hawai'i Nursing Program, the Hawai'i Pacific University Nursing Program, UH Hilo Nursing Program, Kaua'i Community College Nursing Program, Maui Community College Nursing Program, MedImmune, Sanofi Pasteur, Kaiser Permanente, and the Hawai'i Medical Service Association (HMSA).

Information about the program for parents and caregivers is available online at [www.stopfluatschool.com](http://www.stopfluatschool.com) or by calling Aloha United Way's 2-1-1 hotline.

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