



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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GOVERNOR

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**DOH KICKS OFF STOP FLU AT SCHOOL CAMPAIGN
FOR 2009-2010 FLU SEASON**

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH), in collaboration with public and private schools, health care providers, pediatric associations, and federal partners today announced the kickoff of the *Protect Hawai'i's Keiki: Stop Flu at School* program to offer free seasonal flu vaccine in 334 public, private and charter schools this fall. The voluntary statewide program aims to reduce illness in our schools and communities by preventing the spread of flu among schoolchildren and their families.

"The Stop Flu at School campaign is critical this year with the state experiencing higher than usual flu activity this summer," said Lt. Governor James R. "Duke" Aiona, Jr. "Vaccinating our children will help protect them and reduce the spread of seasonal influenza in our communities. I urge parents to take advantage of this convenient and free program."

"School-based flu vaccination is a huge undertaking that requires long-term commitment by the Department of Health, Department of Education, private and charter schools, and our partners each year," said Director of Health Chiyome Fukino, M.D. "Thanks to successful Stop Flu at School efforts in previous years, we are better prepared to respond to a possibly very busy flu season this fall.

This year, participants in Stop Flu at School can sign up for the Hawai'i Immunization Registry, a free service of the DOH where doctors and nurses can store patient immunization records.

(more)

“The Registry is a secure, confidential computer system that will help ensure our children and adults receive the immunizations they need,” said Dr. Fukino. “It is also an important resource in times of emergency or disaster.”

Beginning October 13 through December 2009, the DOH will offer free seasonal flu vaccine to Hawai'i elementary and middle schoolchildren ages 5 to 13 years in the convenience of their school during the school day. Parent/guardian information packets and consent forms are being sent out this week and must be returned to schools no later than September 11, 2009.

“We hope that all parents will see the importance of vaccinating their children against the seasonal flu,” said Department of Education Schools Superintendent Patricia Hamamoto. “Fewer sick days mean more days spent in the classroom, and this campaign is consistent with the overall message we try to encourage among our school populations to be physically fit.”

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 CDC, 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 stopfluatschool.com or by calling Aloha United Way's 2-1-1 hotline.

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