



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH GEARING UP FOR NOVEL H1N1
VACCINATION CAMPAIGN**

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH) is accelerating planning for wide-scale vaccinations and other community mitigation measures in preparation for an expected resurgence of novel H1N1 influenza this fall. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently awarded all states Public Health Emergency Response (PHER) grants to augment these preparedness and response activities. The DOH received \$2.1 million as part of this supplemental funding.

“Given the many unknowns we are facing with novel H1N1 this fall, our ability to plan and rapidly implement activities related to vaccine distribution and dispensing is critical,” stated Director of Health Chiyome Fukino, M.D. “These federal funds will help us to continue building our response capabilities on a very tight timeline.”

“Our epidemiological investigative and state laboratory teams have been severely overextended since the novel 2009 H1N1 virus emerged earlier this spring,” added State Epidemiologist Sarah Y. Park, M.D. “As we progress in ongoing pandemic preparations and response efforts to address tremendous challenges such as mass H1N1 influenza vaccination, the additional support in federal funding will be invaluable.”

DOH is pursuing multiple avenues to ensure optimal distribution of 2009 H1N1 vaccine in the state. Currently, the DOH is working closely with the Department of Education (DOE) on plans for free, voluntary statewide school-located H1N1 vaccination clinics in the winter that will follow the Stop Flu at School program in the fall.

(more)

“Because children are a high-priority group for H1N1 vaccination, it makes sense for the State to offer it in our schools. Although the doubled workload and the difficult public messaging to clearly distinguish for parents between season flu vaccination and 2009 H1N1 vaccination are major challenges, the effort is critical to ensure that as many children as possible receive both vaccinations this year and are protected,” said Dr. Park.

The DOH recently established a pre-registration process for licensed physicians interested in administering 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine this fall and winter, and will also be working with community vaccinators statewide urging them to make the vaccine available at convenient locations.

“The DOH is asking all primary care physicians statewide to pre-register with us for the vaccine now so that when it arrives we can expedite delivery,” said Dr. Park.

The DOH is also working with State Civil Defense and public and private sector partners to identify critical infrastructure and key resource people, partnering with community agencies to protect vulnerable populations.

The H1N1 vaccination campaign initial focus revolves around high-risk groups identified by the CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices based on case investigations and findings from outbreaks in the spring and summer. These include:

- Pregnant women
- Household and caregiver contacts of children aged younger than 6 months
- Health care and emergency medical services personnel
- Children and young adults from 6 months through 24 years
- Persons aged 25 through 64 years who have medical conditions that place them at high risk for complications from influenza.

“Protecting the health of the people of Hawai‘i during the current pandemic is something we can’t do alone,” stressed Dr. Fukino. “We are urging everyone to do their part by practicing good health and hygiene habits, getting vaccinated, and staying home when they are sick.”

For more information on novel H1N1 influenza, go to www.hawaii.gov/health or call 2-1-1.

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