



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

**News Release**

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GOVERNOR

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**SCHOOL-BASED 2009 H1N1 VACCINATION CLINICS UNDER WAY**

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH) began a statewide program today to administer the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine to Hawai'i's schoolchildren. Thousands of Hawai'i elementary and middle school students whose parents signed and returned consent forms will receive their free H1N1 flu vaccine during the coming weeks through this program. In all, 333 public, private and charter school clinics are scheduled across the state during the next few months. Today, 371 students at Moanalua Middle School received the H1N1 influenza vaccine.

"The limited national supply of vaccine has been challenging and we empathize with the public over this frustrating situation," said State Epidemiologist Sarah Park, M.D. "We set aside sufficient doses to begin our school-based program and ensure that all clinics will be held as scheduled so that this important priority group, our keiki, are vaccinated."

"The success of our seasonal flu program paved the way for us to be able to deliver H1N1 vaccine to schoolchildren," said Hawai'i public schools Superintendent Patricia Hamamoto. "It really underscores how important the relationships are among our public-private partners, including school staffs, volunteers, parents and the rest of the public health infrastructure."

Children younger than 10 years old will need to receive two doses of the H1N1 vaccine to achieve full immunization. The school-based clinics will administer one of those doses. Parents of children who participate should consult their primary-care physician to schedule the second dose.

**(more)**

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that populations most at-risk for severe illness or complications from the flu receive priority in getting the vaccine. These groups include:

- pregnant women,
- persons who live with or provide care for infants younger than age 6 months (e.g., parents, siblings, and daycare providers),
- health-care and emergency medical services personnel with direct patient contact,
- persons aged 6 months through 24 years, and
- persons aged 25 through 64 years who have medical conditions that put them at higher risk for influenza-related complications.

Vaccination is the best way to protect against the H1N1 flu and everyone is encouraged to get vaccinated as soon as it becomes available to them. In addition, people are encouraged to practice preventive health measures, including covering your cough, staying home if sick, washing hands frequently, and avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

Visit [flu.hawaii.gov/flu-hawaii-gov/vaccination.html#schedule](http://flu.hawaii.gov/flu-hawaii-gov/vaccination.html#schedule) for a clinic schedule of participating schools. Or call Aloha United Way's 2-1-1 hotline for more information.

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