



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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**HIGH RATES OF HEPATITIS C FOUND AMONG HAWAII'S KUPUNA
HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH PARTNERS WITH CVS
MINUTE CLINICS AND HEP FREE HAWAII TO OFFER SIMPLE TEST
STARTING MAY 19, 2016**

HONOLULU – Hawaii's kupuna -- baby boomers between the ages of 51 and 71 -- are among those most at risk for hepatitis C, which can lead to liver disease or liver cancer. The Hawaii State Department of Health is partnering with CVS Minute Clinics and Hep Free Hawaii to protect kupuna and others by offering convenient hepatitis C point-of-care testing, on an ongoing basis starting on Thursday, May 19, 2016, which is National Hepatitis Testing Day.

All nine CVS Minute Clinics, located within selected Longs Drugs stores on Oahu, will offer a finger-prick test (instead of a blood draw) to check for hepatitis C in persons at risk, especially baby boomers born between 1945 and 1965. Results from the rapid hepatitis C antibody test are available in 20 minutes. This preventive health service is fully covered by most insurance plans with no out-of-pocket costs for members.

Hepatitis C and Liver Cancer

Hawaii is the state with the highest rate of liver cancer in the U.S., and the majority of liver cancer cases in Hawaii are caused by viral hepatitis types B and C. An estimated

23,000 persons in Hawaii are currently living with chronic hepatitis C, which can lead to liver disease and cancer.

Hepatitis C is spread by blood-to-blood exposure (such as sharing injection equipment), but there are also high rates among baby boomers (born 1945-1965), regardless of any known blood exposure. More than one out of four people in Hawaii are baby boomers and should be tested at least once for hepatitis C infection.

Early Detection is Critical

“Most people with hepatitis C don’t know that they have it,” stated Thaddeus Pham, Viral Hepatitis Prevention Coordinator with the Hawaii State Department of Health. “If undetected, hepatitis C can lead to liver disease, liver cancer, or even death. Since hepatitis C is manageable and, in some cases, even curable, people can prevent liver cancer through early detection. We encourage all baby boomers, as well as other Hawaii residents at risk for hepatitis C, to get tested right away. Getting tested is the first step in liver cancer prevention.”

CVS Minute Clinics are staffed by nurse practitioners who not only can administer the test, but also offer other services such as immunizations and non-urgent medical care. They are also committed to ensuring the patients get connected back their primary care providers. The CVS Minute Clinics are currently at 9 select locations on Oahu. See <http://www.cvs.com/minuteclinic/clinics/Hawaii> for exact locations and times. Appointments are first come, first serve, although you can hold a place in line using the Minute Clinic location website.

Partnering with Community

“We’re partnering with local CVS Minute Clinics because we recognize the increasing importance of non-traditional healthcare delivery models,” Pham said. “Many of us often go to our local pharmacy or drug store more often than we go to our doctor. It’s important to use every opportunity to increase awareness and screening for our ohana. Ultimately, it doesn’t matter where you go, as long as you get tested to prevent liver disease and cancer.”

For list of participating sites, go to <http://www.cvs.com/minuteclinic/clinics/Hawaii> or www.hepfreehawaii.org.

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