



**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**STOP FLU AT SCHOOL VACCINATION CLINICS START TODAY**

HONOLULU – The Hawaii State Department of Health’s (DOH) annual Stop Flu at School program begins today and will continue in more than 300 public, private, and charter schools statewide through Nov. 25, 2015. This is the ninth year for the voluntary program, which administers free flu vaccinations to Hawaii students, kindergarten through eighth grade, enrolled at participating schools.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends an annual flu vaccination for everyone six months and older. “Each year, flu causes millions of illnesses, hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations, and thousands of deaths in the U.S.,” said Dr. Sarah Park, State Epidemiologist. “Vaccination is our best defense against the flu, which is why we’ve been so committed to continuing the Stop Flu at School program.”

Since its inception in 2007, the Stop Flu at School program has provided approximately 65,000 flu vaccinations annually. According to the National Immunization Survey-Flu, Hawaii ranked first in the nation for flu vaccination coverage, with 81 percent of 5- to 12-year-olds vaccinated during the 2014-15 influenza season (76 percent for the 2013-2014 influenza season), the age group vaccinated at the Stop Flu at School program.

For more information about the Stop Flu at School program, go to <http://flu.hawaii.gov/sfas.html> or call the Aloha United Way information and referral line at 2-1-1.

The Stop Flu at School program is an innovative partnership between the Hawaii State Department of Health, Department of Education, Hawaii Association of Independent Schools and Hawaii Catholic Schools. The program is endorsed by the Hawaii Chapters of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Academy of Family Physicians, and is made possible through funding from the Hawaii Department of Health, CDC and Hawaii Association of Health Plans.

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