



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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GOVERNOR

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FLU SHOT CLINICS START FOR THE CHRONICALLY ILL

HONOLULU – The Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) held the first of many public flu shot clinics today. DOH expects to deliver nearly 10,000 doses of flu vaccine, to individuals with chronic illness, at clinics across the state between now and mid-December.

“These clinics are the result of a collaborative effort between the private sector medical community and the state health officials,” said Chiyome Fukino M.D., director, Hawaii State Department of Health. “Our common goal is to ensure that our residents who are most vulnerable to the flu are vaccinated. The state appreciates the efforts of the private physicians to notify and screen patients with chronic illness in order to protect those at the highest risk.”

A limited number of appointments are still available. Hawaii residents of any age who have a chronic illness and who have been unable to get a flu shot should contact their doctor. Physicians will refer their chronically ill patients by completing a *Flu Vaccine Order Form 2004-05* and making an appointment. There is no cost to the patient for the flu shot. The DOH is not publicizing clinic locations because appointments must be made by a physician.

For additional information, call your doctor.

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- The limited flu vaccine supply is due to production problems at Chiron Corp., the world's second-leading flu vaccine supplier, that resulted in the British government suspending their manufacturing license earlier this week. This action reduced, by approximately half, the expected 100 million doses of flu vaccine available in the U.S. for the 2004-2005 influenza season.
- Private providers in Hawaii received approximately 230,000 doses of flu vaccine this year. Much of this arrived before the shortage was announced so some vaccine may have gone to non-risk groups.
- DOH has approximately 10,000 doses that will be made available to chronically ill patients at public clinics statewide.
- Healthy individuals are being asked to step aside this year to allow those most at risk to be able to get a flu shot.
- Publicly held vaccine priorities were decided by a team of physicians from a variety of specialties and representatives from hospitals, healthcare organizations, long-term care facilities and military. The determination was made that those at the highest risk from serious complications from the flu are: elderly who reside in long term care facilities and individuals with chronic illness regardless of age.
- Whether or not you get a flu, shot there are still things you can do to protect yourself and your loved ones.
 - Avoiding close contact with people who are sick.
 - Staying home when you are sick.
 - Covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
 - Washing your hands.
 - Avoiding touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Touching something contaminated with germs (doorknob, phone or faucet) and then touching your eyes, nose, or mouth can spread infection.