



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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STATE OUTLINES PLAN TO FIGHT PANDEMIC FLU

Multi-agency committee to convene

HONOLULU — Governor Linda Lingle announced today she will include \$15 million in the executive budget to help prepare the state for the possibility of pandemic flu. The Governor's request, which will require legislative approval, will allow the Department of Health (DOH) to stockpile a supply of antiviral medications and to develop an enhanced data management system to track and monitor illness outcomes in the state.

The Governor's action is in line with the National Pandemic Flu Plan released by President George W. Bush earlier this month. The national plan recommends each state stockpile enough medication to cover 25 percent of the state's base population.

The funds will also allow the DOH to develop an enhanced data management system which will enable the state to track and follow patient response to treatment over time and use this information to appropriately manage the supply of medications.

In addition, Governor Lingle will convene a multi-agency committee to meet and discuss necessary emergency preparations for a possible pandemic. The committee will consist of State agencies (Health; Transportation; Agriculture; Defense; Human Services; Business, Economic Development and Tourism; Land and Natural Resources; and the state tourism liaison), private agencies (Red Cross, Healthcare Association of Hawaii and others) and chairs and ranking minority members of the State House and Senate health committees.

"The stockpiling of antiviral medications is part of our Administration's proactive strategy to protect Hawaii residents and visitors from a possible outbreak of a pandemic flu," said Governor Lingle. "With the Department of Health taking the lead for the state, we will continue to work collaboratively with the medical community and other government, private sector and community organizations to prepare for a possible pandemic and ensure the continued health and safety of the public. The multi-agency committee will focus on developing a coordinated strategy to implement the state's pandemic flu plan."

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“While the risk of a pandemic is unpredictable, the consequences of such a public health emergency would be devastating,” said Health Director Chiyome Fukino, M.D. “We are taking the necessary steps to prepare our state to handle the possibility of pandemic flu.”

The DOH will also be seeking public comment on its draft State Pandemic Flu Plan, which will be available on November 22nd on its website at www.hawaii.gov/health.

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