



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR

CHIYOME LEINAALA FUKINO, M.D.
DIRECTOR
Phone: (808) 586-4410
Fax: (808) 586-4444

For Immediate Release: November 7, 2005

05-74

Hawaii Begins Influenza Surveillance at Honolulu International Airport

Department of Health helps Hawaii establish first airport surveillance program in the U.S.

HONOLULU – The Hawaii State Department of Health (HDOH) have worked together with state and federal partners to enable Hawaii to become the first state in the nation to establish an airport surveillance program designed to detect novel influenza viruses including avian influenza. The program's goal is to improve the state's ability to detect, identify, and prevent the spread and outbreak of common and uncommon flu viruses as well as help curb the potential threat of a pandemic flu outbreak.

“Due to Hawaii’s unique geographic location in the Central Pacific Ocean, we realize how important it is to establish some type of monitoring as well as detection system,” said Health Director Chiyome Fukino, M.D.

The new program will use the current existing protocol, in which the Queen’s Airport Medical Service is called to evaluate ill passengers at the arrival gate when pilots notify the Honolulu airport tower of such. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Quarantine Station as well as the HDOH may also be notified if the passenger is assessed to have a potentially communicable disease.

Under the new airport surveillance program, passengers who present with fever and respiratory symptoms would also be requested to undergo testing for flu virus by sampling with a nasal swab. This new program is an important extension of Hawaii’s influenza sentinel surveillance.

###

For more information, contact:
Janice Okubo
Hawaii State Department of Health
Phone: (808) 586-4442
Email: janice.okubo@doh.hawaii.gov

Additional Contact:
Bryan Cheplic
Hawaii State Department of Health
Phone: (808) 586-4402
Email: bryan.chePLIC@doh.hawaii.gov