



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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For Immediate Release: April 15, 2009

09-025

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CONDUCTS PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT
PROJECT ON PLANNING FOR POTENTIAL PANDEMIC INFLUENZA**

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH) is launching "Vaccine: Surviving Hawai'i's Next Pandemic," a public initiative project to involve the public in discussions of planning for a potential influenza pandemic, including how to prioritize the distribution of limited supplies of vaccine in the event of a pandemic. The demonstration project is funded by a grant from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and invites the public to participate in any or all of three components: live, viewer call-in televised panel discussions, an Alternate Reality Game (ARG) in which a simulated pandemic strikes a future Hawai'i, and community meetings in May.

"The key to disaster response is preparedness," said Lt. Governor James R. "Duke" Aiona, Jr. "With a focus on public engagement as part of the decision-making process, this project reinforces our efforts to develop a collaborative solution."

"Open communication with the public is an essential part of government transparency," said Dr. Chiyome Fukino, director of health. "This project is designed to offer a range of opportunities for public dialogue and will be evaluated for use as a model for other states to follow."

"What are the community's values and opinions regarding vaccine prioritization? What are the unique concerns facing Hawai'i's people? These are key questions," said Dr. Sarah Park, chief, Disease Outbreak Control Division and principal investigator for the project. "We really want to

hear from people on important community issues that should be considered by the leaders who will have to make the difficult choices in the event of a pandemic.”

The television segment of the project starts today, April 15, 8:00 -9:00 p.m. on KHNL-TV Channel 8 and continues again on April 22 and 29 from 8-9 p.m.. The three live, call-in panel discussions will cover different perspectives on the subject of vaccine prioritization during a pandemic. Panelists will include Lt. Governor James R. “Duke” Aiona Jr., Dr. Chiyome Fukino, DOH director, Dr. Sarah Park, state epidemiologist and chief of the DOH Disease Outbreak Control Division, and a diverse lineup of other panelists from throughout the community. Rebroadcasts of the show will air April 19, 26 and May 3 from 6-7 p.m. on KFVE Channel 5, or viewers may log on to www.khnl.com for streaming video of the broadcasts.

The Alternate Reality Game (www.coralcross.org) will run May 24-30 and puts users into the scenario of Hawai'i in the year 2012 in a simulated influenza pandemic, for which there is not yet a vaccine supply. Each day of the scenario will constitute one “virtual month,” and participants will gain insight into the social, economic, and public health aspects of a pandemic as it unfolds.

The community meetings portion of the public engagement project is built around illustrative vignettes using representative characters drawn from Hawai'i's diverse population for the purposes of highlighting the difficulty of determining who should receive the vaccine first in time of shortage. The free and open meetings are scheduled for May, with times and places to be announced.

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