



JTF-HD Press Release
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Joint Task Force Homeland Defense provides flu vaccine to pacific partners

By JTF-HD Public Affairs

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Fort Shafter, HAWAII – The Department of Defense (DOD) is donating over 10,000 doses of excess influenza vaccine to its pacific island partners through the U.S./Pacific Islands (US/PI) Vaccine Program. In the U.S. alone, seasonal influenza kills approximately 36,000 Americans on average each year. The victims are primarily infants and the elderly. The vaccination is mandatory for active duty and recommended to all DOD beneficiaries who can receive it. Invariably, despite efforts to have everyone receive the vaccine, DOD ends up with excess vaccine that is destroyed at the end of the influenza season or when the vaccine expires. Joint Task Force Homeland Defense (JTF-HD), recognized the need in the US/PI for influenza vaccine and the excess influenza vaccine available through DOD and began the US/PI Vaccine Program during the 2006-2007 flu season in the U.S. Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands (CNMI). “The US/PI Vaccine Program is a collaborative effort between DOD, U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), pacific island public health communities and the private sector airline industry. Without them this important program would not be possible” said Michelle Garcia, JTF-HD Interagency Coordinator.

JTF-HD works with the local jurisdictions to identify the requirement and coordinates the vaccine delivery. The U.S. Army Medical Material Agency obtains the excess DOD vaccination nationwide before it is shipped to the Military Vaccine Agency and packaged by the Division of Logistics at Tripler Army Medical Center. Fort Campbell, Fort Benning, Fort Gordon, Fort Carson, Fort Bragg and the Naval Academy participated this year by donating over 10,000 doses of influenza vaccine. The Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) donated temperature gauges that identify if the vaccine is kept at an appropriate temperature throughout the journey. These items are valued at over \$5,000. This year's shipments total \$86,000 and are being delivered to American Samoa by Hawaiian Airlines; and to Guam, Saipan, Kosrae and Majuro by the USCG. "This is always a great experience for me," said George Ka'anana, Cargo Sales Manager for Hawaiian Airlines. "The good folks at Army medicine and JTF-HD recognize the need is always there and they act upon it. I'm very proud to work with these people," added Ka'anana.

Receiving the flu shot protects not only the recipient, but also all those people who work closely or live with the vaccine recipient, extending the benefit of the vaccines beyond the actual number of doses shipped. "This program enables Pacific Islanders to be immunized against influenza, which is a year-round disease in the tropics," said Daniel Copp, JTF-HD Medical Planner. Deliveries began March 13th and will continue through April to the various locations. Hawaiian Airlines has and continues to provide the transportation at no cost. "It gives us a great feeling and it's an honor to be involved with this great opportunity," said Ka'anana.

Headquartered at Fort Shafer, Hawaii, JTF-HD maintains situational awareness of all domains within the Joint Operations Area; executes mission command of assigned forces in the land domain to conduct Homeland Defense operations to deter and defeat threats to critical infrastructure and key resources and when requested/validated, conducts Civil Support operations in response to all hazards to mitigate human suffering and reduce infrastructure damage.

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(For additional information and/or clarification contact JTF-HD at (808) 438-5853.)



Army Spc. Brandon Crow, Salem, Ark. and Pfc. Jacob Venechuk, Portage, Wis. load boxes of vaccine into U.S. Coast Guard aircraft bound for Majuro. The vaccine delivery, a joint venture featuring Joint Task Force Homeland Defense (JTF-HD); Tripler Army Medical Center (TAMC); U.S. Army Medical Material Agency; Hawaiian Airlines; and the U.S. Coast Guard, is part of a program referred to as the 'United States/Pacific Islands (US/PI) Vaccine Program. Tens of thousands of dollars worth of excess vaccines are distributed each year in the JTF-HD Joint Operations Area (JOA). (Official Department of Defense photo by Darrell D. Ames)



A U.S. Coast Guard flight crew pauses for a moment prior to loading boxes of vaccine onto the aircraft bound for Majuro. The vaccine delivery, a joint venture featuring Joint Task Force Homeland Defense (JTF-HD); Tripler Army Medical Center (TAMC); U.S. Army Medical Material Agency; Hawaiian Airlines; and the U.S. Coast Guard, is part of a program referred to as the 'United States/Pacific Islands (US/PI) Vaccine Program. Tens of thousands of dollars worth of excess vaccines are distributed each year in the JTF-HD Joint Operations Area (JOA). (Official Department of Defense photo by Darrell D. Ames)



Daniel Copp, Joint Task Force Homeland Defense (JTF-HD) Medical Planner (far right), poses with members of the Hawaiian Airlines cargo handling crew as they prepare to load vaccine shipments aboard one of their commercial jets. The vaccine delivery, a joint venture featuring Joint Task Force Homeland Defense (JTF-HD); Tripler Army Medical Center (TAMC); U.S. Army Medical Command; Hawaiian Airlines; and the U.S. Coast Guard, is part of a program referred to as the 'United States/Pacific Islands (US/PI) Vaccine Program. Tens of thousands of dollars worth of excess vaccines are distributed each year in the JTF-HD Joint Operations Area (JOA). (Official Department of Defense photo by Darrell D. Ames)



A load of vaccine sits at the Hawaiian Airlines cargo loading area awaiting transfer to one of their commercial jets enroute to American Samoa in the Pacific. The vaccine delivery, a joint venture featuring Joint Task Force Homeland Defense (JTF-HD); Tripler Army Medical Center (TAMC); U.S. Army Medical Material Agency; Hawaiian Airlines; and the U.S. Coast Guard, is part of a program referred to as the 'United States/Pacific Islands (US/PI) Vaccine Program. Tens of thousands of dollars worth of excess vaccines are distributed each year in the JTF-HD Joint Operations Area (JOA). (Official Department of Defense photo by Darrell D. Ames)