Statewide Health Organizers Partner up to
Push the Message of Vaccinations for Children

New Statewide Whooping Cough Vaccine requirement starts this school year

Today, health officials and organizers from around the State of Illinois are partnering up to raise awareness about the importance of protecting children against deadly diseases by getting vaccinated. With kids headed home from overnight camp, and the beginning of the school year just around the corner, parents are being urged to make sure their children are up-to-date with vaccinations.

The Northern Illinois Public Health Consortium (NIPHC), which is made up of 11 public health departments including the Cook County Department of Public Health, is joining with the Chicago Area Immunization Campaign (CAIC), the Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (ICAAP), and the Illinois Academy of Family Physicians (IAFP) to stress the importance of vaccinations.

While most vaccine-preventable diseases have become rare, some outbreaks still occur. In Illinois, over 1,500 cases of pertussis (also known as whooping cough) were reported in 2011, 280 of those cases were from suburban Cook County. The number of whooping cough cases in 2011 increased by more than 40 percent from 2010. As of August 2012, Illinois has already recorded over 1,200 cases. Currently, Illinois ranks 5th nationally with four states having more whooping cough cases than Illinois - these states include Wisconsin, Washington, Minnesota, and New York.

With school around the corner, health officials are stressing the importance of parents checking with their children’s doctor to make sure their children are up to date with all of their shots. Whooping cough is on the rise, making it especially important that every child is vaccinated against it. Most children are vaccinated against whooping cough before entering kindergarten. However, a booster dose (Tdap) is necessary because protection from the pre-school vaccines decreases over time.

To reduce the number of whooping cough cases, children 11 years and older and unvaccinated adults should get this booster as soon as possible. Whooping cough is easily transmitted in schools. This year the State of Illinois has a new requirement for sixth and ninth grade students to show proof of having received a single dose of Tdap.

Parents should discuss Tdap and all recommended vaccines with their healthcare providers when taking their children for their back-to-school physicals. For vaccination schedules, visit the CDC’s web site at: http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/index.html.

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- The Northern Illinois Public Health Consortium is a 501 (c)(4) organization of the public health departments of the City of Chicago, the Village of Skokie, and the Counties of Cook, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, Will
and Winnebago. Its mission is to promote and protect the health of the region through networking and collaborative action that raises public awareness, builds constituency, and influences legislation and policies concerning public health issues affecting northern Illinois.

- The Chicago Area Immunization Campaign, a project of the Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition, is a broad-based coalition of public and private sector partners working together to increase immunization rates and prevent disease across the lifespan by promoting the delivery of safe, effective, and timely immunizations.
- The Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics advocates on behalf of children, families, and health professionals in Illinois to improve the health and well-being of children. ICAAP educates pediatricians and other health care providers on vaccine-preventable diseases, immunizations, and policy changes.
- The Illinois Academy of Family Physicians is a professional medical society dedicated to maintaining high standards of family medicine representing over 4,000 family physicians, residents and medical students. IAFP is active with community health departments and other organizations in providing education and up to date information on immunizations to its membership.

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