



RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

NICK LYON
DIRECTOR

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CONTACT: Jennifer Eisner
517-241-2112

Importance of vaccinating children highlighted during National Infant Immunization Week

LANSING, Mich. – The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services has joined public health departments nationwide in recognizing [National Infant Immunization Week](#) from April 22 – 29. During this week, MDHHS is promoting routine childhood immunizations by encouraging parents of young children to get their little Michiganders vaccinated on time.

“Vaccinations are one of the best public health achievements in history,” says Dr. Eden Wells, chief medical executive with MDHHS. “Children shouldn’t die from diseases like pertussis and influenza in 2017. We have vaccines to protect against these diseases, and we need to make sure infants have all the protection they can get by staying current with the recommended immunizations.”

National Infant Immunization Week (NIIW) is an annual observance focused on the importance of protecting infants from vaccine-preventable diseases and celebrating the achievements of immunization programs. NIIW is being celebrated as part of World Immunization Week – a World Health Organization initiative to globally promote immunization, improve equity in the use of vaccines, and advance universal access to vaccination services.

Vaccine-preventable diseases, such as whooping cough (pertussis), chickenpox (varicella), mumps, and hepatitis A, still circulate in Michigan. According to 2015 National Immunization Survey (NIS) data, Michigan is below the national average of 72.2 percent for pediatric immunization series coverage of children ages 19 months through 35 months, with one-third of Michigan children in that age group not fully immunized with the pediatric vaccine series. Half of Michigan children are not fully vaccinated with all age-appropriate vaccines by seven months of age, leaving our most vulnerable residents susceptible to vaccine-preventable diseases.

Ensuring children are vaccinated according to the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) childhood immunization schedule provides the best protection early in life. In March of this year, MDHHS joined the Franny Strong Foundation to launch the IVaccinate campaign to promote childhood immunizations. The Franny Strong Foundation was created by Veronica and Sean McNally, whose infant daughter died from pertussis in 2012. The goals of IVaccinate are to make parents aware of the overwhelming consensus within the medical community that vaccines are safe and effective, that getting their children vaccinated is the best thing parents can do to protect them from vaccine-preventable diseases, and that most parents do believe in vaccinations.

If you have questions or concerns about vaccines, MDHHS encourages parents to talk to your healthcare provider and visit www.ivaccinate.org for more information. For more information on NIIW, visit www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niiw/index.html.

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