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For Immediate Release

Date: July 31, 2014

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Vaccines aren't just for kids

Washtenaw County Public Health cites successes and challenges during National Immunization Awareness Month

YPSILANTI, Mich., July 31, 2014 – Washtenaw County ranks first among Michigan counties for vaccinating children against seasonal flu – but near the bottom (66 of 84 counties) for fully vaccinating 13- to 17-year-olds. During August, Washtenaw County Public Health reminds residents that vaccines are not just for kids. Vaccines are safe and one of the best tools available to prevent serious and sometimes deadly diseases in our community.

“When everyone stays up to date on their vaccinations, we are all healthier,” says Dr. Alice Penrose medical director with Washtenaw County Public Health.

On time vaccination can prevent serious illnesses like the flu, measles and whooping cough. In 2013, however, 11 percent of Washtenaw County preschool and school children were not fully vaccinated. This gap leaves all area children more vulnerable to serious illness.

Washtenaw County has a higher percentage of parents waiving recommended vaccines for their school-age children than other Michigan counties. Washtenaw ranks 63rd among Michigan counties for vaccine waivers.

Washtenaw’s waiver rate is one of several factors likely contributing to the high number of pertussis or whooping cough cases. Washtenaw County had nearly 200 cases of pertussis in 2013. Pertussis continues to circulate in 2014 with several new cases reported each week.

“Scientific research has shown that vaccines are safe and do not cause autism, allergies or other disorders. If you have questions about vaccine safety, ask your medical provider,” says Chris Karpinski, RN, immunization nurse coordinator at Washtenaw County Public Health.

National Immunization Awareness Month

Throughout the month, Washtenaw County Public Health will provide weekly information, tools and resources on our website <http://publichealth.ewashtenaw.org>, [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Most people know that babies and children get vaccinated, but teens and adults need to make sure they are protected as well. Vaccines offer benefits that go beyond protection from one disease. Adults who get an annual flu vaccine are healthier and have a lower risk of stroke, heart attack and pneumonia than those who skip it. Pregnant women who get Tdap and an annual flu vaccine pass immunity onto their child for protection in the first few months of life.

Vaccine recommendations for all ages

If you are unsure which vaccines are recommend for you or your loved ones, use the guides below and talk with your health care provider. Talking with your health care provider is important. Vaccine recommendations change with age and other factors, such as where you live, work or travel and any medical conditions you may have.

Everyone age 6 months and older needs a seasonal flu vaccine every year. Other vaccinations work best when they are given at certain ages.

- Children 6 years and younger:
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/downloads/parent-ver-sch-0-6yrs.pdf>
- Preteens and teens 7 to 18 years:
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/who/teens/downloads/parent-version-schedule-7-18yrs.pdf>
- Adults over 18 years:
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/downloads/adult/adult-schedule-easy-read.pdf>
- Pregnant women: http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/downloads/f_preg_chart.pdf

Washtenaw County Public Health

Washtenaw County Public Health offers vaccines to children and adults regardless of insurance status or income. Call 734-544-6700 or visit our immunizations page at <http://publichealth.ewashtenaw.org>. For information about local vaccination rates, see Washtenaw County's Immunization Report Card as of June 30, 2014 http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdch/Washtenaw_447508_7.pdf

Other resources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [Vaccines & Immunizations](#)

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia [Vaccine Information Center](#)

Immunization Action Coalition [Vaccine Information](#)

Michigan Department of Community Health [Immunization Program](#)

Washtenaw County Public Health promotes health and works to prevent disease and injury in our community. Visit us online at <http://publichealth.ewashtenaw.org>.

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