

WIAAC



Washtenaw Immunization Action Coalition
P.O. Box 0915 ♦ Ypsilanti, MI 48197-0915 ♦ 734.544.6769

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Contact: **Lynn Ochs,** Region 1 Manager, Southeastern Michigan Health Association
E-mail: lochs@hline.org
Phone: (734) 544-6864

Kathy Webster, Immunization Nurse Coordinator, Washtenaw County Public Health Department
E-mail: websterk@ewashtenaw.org
Phone: (734) 544-6769

Gray R. Reynolds, Communications Manager/PIO, Washtenaw County Public Health Department
E-mail: reynoldsg@ewashtenaw.org
Phone: (734) 544-3091

WASHTENAW IMMUNIZATION ACTION COALITION FORMED

Diverse Community Organization Seeks to Raise Public Awareness, Increase Access to Vaccines and Reduce Vaccine-Preventable Diseases

YPSILANTI, Mich., November 19, 2007—A community-based group of professionals concerned with reducing vaccine-preventable diseases by raising public awareness and access to vaccines, today announced it has formally organized itself into the **Washtenaw Immunization Action Coalition (WIAAC)**.

WIAAC membership includes, but is not limited to, representatives from the Washtenaw County Public Health Department, Ann Arbor Public Schools, Willow Run Public Schools, The University of Michigan, Integrated Healthcare Associates (IHA), Southeastern Michigan Health Association, MFit, Michigan Visiting Nurses, Kroger Pharmacy, Trinity Health and the Michigan Care Improvement Registry (MCIR), among others. The coalition is encouraging interested representatives from other organizations, including school and childcare facilities, city government, service clubs, existing health coalitions, faith-based organizations, as well as physicians, to contact WIAAC for additional information.

The coalition meets monthly to discuss all topics relevant to the production, availability and distribution of most common vaccines. Past topics of discussion have included flu vaccine availability, school immunization programs, state legislation affecting MCIR, human papillomavirus (HPV), measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine, and new vaccine research. The coalition also discusses communication activities that support WIAAC's mission statement:

The Washtenaw Immunization Action Coalition is a partnership to decrease vaccine-preventable diseases across the lifespan of our population through improved public awareness and access to vaccines.

Dr. Stan Reedy, Medical Director of the Washtenaw County Public Health Department and current chair of WIAC, said he believes the coalition creates a forum for dialog and a catalyst for partnerships among community organizations that have a vested interest in encouraging vaccinations.

“The number of vaccines and vaccine providers has increased significantly over the past few years. That’s why it’s important for coalition members to meet regularly to discuss and coordinate their efforts,” Reedy said. “By working together, we can do a better job of building awareness and keeping the public informed about the benefits of vaccinating themselves and their families than we could ever do as separate organizations.

“The diversity of our membership enables us to address most issues relative to commonly used vaccines,” Reedy said. “As a coalition, we intend to publicly comment—on a regular basis—about vaccination issues that the public should be aware of, concerned with, and more knowledgeable about.”

A preliminary schedule of timeframes and communication priorities for the remainder of 2007-8 was released by the WIAC, and includes the following dates and topics:

Timeframe	Topic
November 2007	WIAC Kickoff Announcement
December 2007	The Faces of Influenza—Flu Shots
January 2008	Adult (and Older Adult) Vaccinations
February 2008	Human Papillomavirus (HPV)
March 2008	The Michigan Care Improvement Registry (MCIR)
April 2008	Infant Vaccinations
May 2008	National and State Immunization Policy
June 2008	Expecting? Immunizations and Pregnant Women
July 2008	Older Teen and Adult Vaccinations: Meningitis and Tdap Vaccines
August 2008	Back to School—Schoolchildren Vaccinations
September 2008	Examining Objections to Vaccinations
October 2008	Pneumonia Vaccinations—Necessary?
November 2008	Influenza Season is Here

“Apart from our monthly discussions on topics of interest to the coalition, our main means of communication to the public and the media will be—for now—through our monthly press releases, “ said Gray Reynolds, Communications Manager and Public Information Officer for the Washtenaw County Public Health Department. “While we expect to launch a website in 2008, we are currently self-funded, meaning that we will increase our ability to conduct public relations activities as we grow and secure additional resources,” Reynolds said.

“In spite of our humble beginnings, our diverse membership means the public and the media can rely on this coalition for knowledgeable, balanced opinions and thought leadership regarding the state of immunizations in Washtenaw County.”

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