



Health Department Hopes to Build on Success of H1N1 Vaccination Campaign

Check Your Child's Immunization Record During National Public Health Week April 5-9

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BURLINGTON – The Vermont Department of Health hopes to build on the success of its 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccination campaign by encouraging parents to make sure their children are protected against all vaccine preventable childhood diseases.

Vaccination rates for young children in Vermont have slightly increased since 2005 from 63 percent in 2005 to 64.5 percent in 2008, but still lags behind the national average.

“This leaves many children at risk for preventable diseases, not just children who are not vaccinated, but also children too young to be vaccinated,” said Health Commissioner Wendy Davis, MD. “These vaccines are proven, safe and effective, and every child in Vermont should be immunized.”

Recent reports of a mumps outbreak in New York and measles in Vancouver, Canada have shown that vaccine preventable diseases are still causing illness in the U.S. and worldwide. Currently, 89 percent of children have received a dose of MMR (mumps, measles, rubella) vaccine in Vermont, down from 93 percent in 2005. This leaves Vermont children more vulnerable to illness.

Although measles is no longer a common disease in the United States, people traveling overseas who are not vaccinated can contract measles, as it is very contagious. Worldwide measles accounted for an estimated 164,000 deaths in 2008, a decrease of 78 percent from 2000.

The last measles case in Vermont was reported in 2001.

Vermont was particularly effective at vaccinating young children during the H1N1 outbreak, with more than 75,000 children in the most vulnerable age group protected against the virus.

As recently as 2003, Vermont was recognized by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention as having among the nation's highest childhood immunization rates (among 2-year-old children).

“The best protection is to immunize your child. Vermonters clearly demonstrated they understood the importance of protecting their children and each other as we responded to the H1N1 outbreak. We can, and should, build on that,” Dr. Davis said.

For more information on childhood immunizations visit healthvermont.gov. You can also follow us on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/healthvermont>.

For more information on National Public Health Week “A Healthier America, One Community at a Time” visit: www.nphw.org.

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