



Department of Health  
Agency of Human Services



## Health Department to Host 2011 Immunization Conference

*Local and national experts to attend on Friday Oct. 28 in Stowe*

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BURLINGTON – Vermont’s childhood immunization rate is among the lowest in the U.S., but this was not always the case. A decade ago, Vermont was ranked one of the best states in the percentage of children who were fully immunized.

When immunization rates drop, a window opens for serious childhood illnesses to spread throughout the community. Recent outbreaks of diseases like measles and whooping cough highlight the importance of immunizing children according to the schedule published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

More than 250 health care providers and public health workers from around the state will gather at the **2011 Immunization Conference on Friday, October 28th at the Stoweflake Resort (9 a.m. to 3 p.m.)** to learn about the newest recommendations, and what health care providers and parents want to know about vaccines for children.

“We know that both health care providers and parents want more information – and time – to talk about vaccines and why it’s so important for children to be fully immunized against 14 diseases by age 2,” said Christine Finley, the Health Department’s immunization program chief. “Coming together with our partners in the health care community allows us to share information, learn from each other, and raise our immunization rates to protect all children.”

The keynote speaker, Dr. William Atkinson, from the CDC, will explain how to make sense of the new vaccine recommendations. In the morning session, Dr. Bill Raszka, a pediatric infectious disease specialist at Fletcher Allen Health Care, will address vaccine refusal. Dr. Raszka will be followed by a panel of local experts who will discuss how to talk with parents who are reluctant to have their child vaccinated.

For the full conference agenda visit: <http://healthvermont.gov/hc/imm/2011VTImmunizationConference.aspx>.

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