



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



Barre Pediatrics Nurse Named as Vermont's 2013 Childhood Immunization Champion

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BARRE – Kristin Gilbert, RN, of Associates in Pediatrics – Barre has been recognized as Vermont's 2013 Childhood Immunization Champion by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC). When asked how she felt about this honor, Gilbert replied: "It's my job."

Tara Reil, RN, a public health nurse in the Barre District Office nominated Gilbert because she does far more to improve childhood immunization rates than her daily job requires. Gilbert is determined to see as many children as possible in her community immunized against vaccine-preventable diseases.

"She knows her patients and provides personalized outreach to the families, and she is outstanding with parents who have questions," said Reil. "She wants her patients to have the best and most current information so they can make informed decisions."

Gilbert routinely sends recalls and reminders to families who have missed vaccinations or who are overdue for an appointment. When appointment schedules are tight, she still finds time to sit down with parents and talk. She listens closely so that she can pinpoint their issues, such as parents who think their children are receiving too many shots at too early an age.

"I try to get a feel for where their decision-making is coming from and focus on that," Gilbert said. "It's our responsibility as providers to help parents understand that vaccination improves the health of everybody – children, adolescents, parents – it protects everyone. They need to know that protecting people is as much their responsibility as the health care provider."

In addition to the daily patient education that Gilbert does at her office, she recently volunteered to contribute to *It's OK to Ask* – a web-centered public information campaign launched this month by the Health Department.

The website – oktoaskvt.org – has research-based medical information and video discussions among Vermont moms. Parents can also submit questions that will be reviewed and answered by a local pediatrician, nurse or fellow parent. Gilbert is one of the nurses who will answer questions throughout the campaign.



"This really matters to me – proactively reaching out to parents," Gilbert said.

For more information about childhood immunizations, also visit the Health Department at healthvermont.gov. Follow us on [Twitter](#) and join us on [Facebook](#) for health information, news and alerts.

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