



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



Vermont Achieves Top Scores on 2012 Trust for America's Health Report: Ready or Not?

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BURLINGTON – Vermont was one of only five states in the nation to achieve a score of eight out of 10 in the “*Ready or Not? Protecting the Public's Health from Diseases, Disasters, and Bioterrorism*” report by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

The annual report was released on Wednesday, the same day more than 3,200 doses of whooping cough (Tdap) vaccine were administered at the 12 Health Department district offices. The vaccine clinics were managed by Health Department's Health Operations Center.

“Yesterday was a great example of how our training and practice in emergency response has paid off,” said Health Commissioner Harry Chen, MD. “This was an ‘all-hands-on deck’ effort by our public health staff, as our district offices each moved hundreds of people seamlessly through the process of getting protected against a widespread outbreak of disease.”

Ten key public health preparedness indicators were measured in the report, such as funding commitment to public health programs, response readiness to notify and assemble a quick response to an incident, infectious disease control, emergency management, and extreme weather event preparedness.

The two indicators that Vermont did not earn a point for were: “Health System Preparedness” because the state does not participate in a nurse licensure compact, and “Infectious Disease Control and Vaccinations” because the state did not meet the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services goal of vaccinating 90 percent of 19- to 35-month olds against whooping cough. Vermont's rate is 88.2 percent, 1.8 percent short of the goal.

The Health Department offered free vaccine yesterday for anyone over the age of 11, which is among the age group with the highest infection rate of the 568 confirmed cases to date statewide, and the most likely to spread the disease to infants and children.

“We put out the call to Vermonters yesterday to come together and protect infants and children, and, once again, they stepped up and did the right thing,” Dr. Chen said. “We can all be proud of that effort.”

The full TFAH report, with state rankings is available at: www.healthyamericans.org.

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