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Vermont Health Professionals Recognized for High Childhood Immunization Rates
April 22-29 is National Infant Immunization Week

BURLINGTON – Nine physician care practices in Vermont have been recognized by the Vermont Department of Health for their high percentage of infants, children and teens immunized against vaccine-preventable diseases.

The awards were presented as part of National Infant Immunization Week (NIIW), an annual observance to highlight the importance of protecting infants from vaccine-preventable diseases.

The nine practices and their staff were recognized for meeting the *HealthyPeople 2020* goals for childhood immunization. Practices with at least 20 patients in the appropriate age ranges had to meet national immunization goals, including babies having received the recommended immunizations by age 2 to protect them from 14 serious childhood diseases, such as whooping cough and measles. Last year, five practices in Vermont met the criteria.

- At least 90 percent of 2-year-old patients were up to date for DTaP, Polio, MMR, Hib, HepB, VAR, and PCV
- At least 80 percent of teens were up to date for Tdap and MCV
- At least 70 percent progress toward the HPV (3-dose series) target of 80 percent

“The doctors, nurses and provider staff in our communities play a critical role in supporting a parent’s decision to vaccinate their children” said Christine Finley, immunization program manager for the Health Department. “We can see in our data that parents around the state are choosing to vaccinate their children, because they trust that vaccines provide safe and effective protection against 14 diseases that range from very rare to common in Vermont.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, among children born during 1994-2016, vaccination will prevent an estimated 381 million illnesses, 24.5 million hospitalizations, and 855,000 deaths over the course of their lifetimes.

Finley said that with potentially fatal diseases just a plane ride away, the trends toward an increasing number of Vermont's infants and children being vaccinated is important. "A low percentage of immunization coverage has contributed to situations like the current measles outbreak in Minnesota, where at least 21 children are infected and 50 percent of those have been hospitalized," said Finley. "We encourage parents to talk to their child's doctor and ensure that their baby is up to date on immunizations."

Health Care Provider Practices Recognized

- Rebecca Collman, MD – Burlington
- Essex Pediatrics, PC – Essex Jct.
- Gifford Pediatrics – White River Junction
- Green Mountain Pediatrics, PC – Bennington
- Hagan, Rinehart & Connolly Pediatricians – Burlington
- Richmond Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine – Richmond
- Springfield Health Center Family Medicine – Springfield
- UVMHN CVMC Pediatric Primary Care – Barre
- UVM Medical Center Pediatric Primary Care – Williston

Check the Health Department's Performance Scorecard to see whether Vermonters are getting their recommended vaccinations: <http://www.healthvermont.gov/scorecard-infectious-disease>

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