

## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:  
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### **Parents Reminded to Keep Infants Up-to-Date on Vaccinations During National Infant Immunization Week**

BISMARCK, N.D. – During National Infant Immunization Week, April 22 – 29, 2017, the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) reminds parents of the importance of protecting infants from vaccine-preventable diseases.

National Infant Immunization Week is an annual observance that emphasizes the need to fully immunize children 24 months and younger against 14 vaccine-preventable diseases. Following the recommended immunization schedule not only protects the infant, but everyone in their community by preventing and reducing the spread of infectious diseases.

“Measles cases and outbreaks continue to be reported in the United States,” said Howell. “For example, Minnesota is currently experiencing an outbreak of measles, with 20 cases reported out of Hennepin County. The Minnesota outbreak is a reminder that outbreaks could occur anywhere, including North Dakota, which is why it is important to vaccinate. Vaccines not only help protect vaccinated individuals, but also help protect entire communities by preventing and reducing the spread of infectious diseases, such as measles.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, among children born during 1994-2013, vaccination will prevent an estimated 322 million illnesses, 21 million hospitalizations and 732,000 deaths over the course of their lifetimes.

According to the National Immunization Survey, North Dakota’s infant immunization rate is 80.2 percent, which is above the national average of 72.2 percent.

“Although North Dakota’s infant immunization rate is above the national average, 20 percent of North Dakota infants are not fully vaccinated on time, leaving them vulnerable to diseases,” said Howell. “Parents should contact their primary care physician or local public health unit for vaccinations for their children.”

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## **National Infant Immunization Week-2**

As part of National Infant Immunization Week, the NDDoH would also like to recognize Chantel Hillius-Kramlich, registered nurse and health coach, from Mid Dakota Clinic in Bismarck, N.D. Hillius-Kramlich was chosen to receive the CDC Childhood Immunization Champion Award for North Dakota. The award recognized individuals who make a significant contribution toward improving public health through their work in childhood immunization.

For more information about National Infant Immunization Week, contact Howell at 701.328.2378 or at 1.800.472.2180, or visit our website at [www.ndhealth.gov/immunize](http://www.ndhealth.gov/immunize).

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