

NEWS RELEASE

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Keep Infants Up-to-Date on Vaccinations to Prevent the Spread of Disease

BISMARCK, N.D. – During National Infant Immunization Week (NIIW), April 21–28, 2018, the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) is emphasizing the need to fully immunize children 24 months and younger against 14 vaccine-preventable diseases.

“Vaccines are among the most successful and cost-effective public health tools available for preventing disease and death,” said Molly Howell, immunization program manager for the NDDoH. “They not only help protect vaccinated individuals, but also help protect entire communities by preventing and reducing the spread of infectious diseases.”

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

According to the National Immunization Survey, North Dakota’s infant immunization rate is 68.2 percent, which is below the national average of 70.7 percent.

“About 30 percent of North Dakota infants are not fully vaccinated on time, leaving them vulnerable to diseases,” said Howell.

Quarterly, the NDDoH sends letters to parents of infants who are 30 or more days past due for immunizations. “Parents should contact their primary care physician or local public health unit to schedule vaccinations for their children as soon as they receive a letter.”

As part of NIIW, the NDDoH also recognized Tyawna Ackerman, registered nurse, from Jacobson Memorial Hospital Care Center in Elgin and Glen Ullin, ND. Ackerman received 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 NIIW, contact Molly Howell, NDDoH Immunization Program Manager, at 701.328.2378, 1.800.472.2180 or visit the website at www.ndhealth.gov/immunize.

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