



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 11, 2008

Health District advises of new school immunization requirements;
Special Saturday immunization clinic scheduled for Jan. 26

LAS VEGAS – Think that children are finished with their immunizations once they enter kindergarten? Think again. Many parents don't realize that "whooping cough," or pertussis, is one of the most common respiratory illnesses in American teens. Recently, the Nevada State Board of Health enacted new immunization regulations that require children entering seventh grade to be immunized against *Bordetella pertussis*. The Southern Nevada Health District provides the Tdap (tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis) vaccine to protect against the illness. In addition, college freshmen younger than 24 years of age who will reside in on-campus housing at a Nevada college or university will be required to receive the immunization against *Neisseria meningitidis* (Meningococcus). Both requirements will be implemented for the upcoming 2008-09 academic year. The Tdap and the meningitis immunizations are recommended for all pre-teens and both are available at the Southern Nevada Health District. For more information, contact the health district's immunization office at (702) 759-0850 or visit www.SouthernNevadaHealthDistrict.org. Parents can also contact their pediatricians or health care providers for information.

The health district will offer a special pre-teen and children's immunization clinic between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m., Saturday, January 26 at its main campus, 625 Shadow Lane. The Tdap and meningitis vaccines will be available as well as all other childhood and teen immunizations. Parents must bring immunization records. Children with no immunization records will have to begin the immunization sequence from the beginning. Non-custodial adults may accompany a child, however, written consent must be provided to the health district from the parent or guardian at the time of service. An administrative fee of \$16 per patient for one immunization or \$20 per patient for two or more immunizations will be collected. Some vaccines might require an additional fee.

As part of Pre-Teen Vaccine Week (Jan. 20-26), health district representatives will meet with community health care providers to discuss the new school requirements and provide the most recent information about pre-teen vaccines. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), both recommend that 11- and 12-year-old children receive the Tdap (tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis) vaccine as well as the meningitis vaccine, MCV4, which protects against the disease and its complications. In addition, girls should receive the HPV vaccine to protect them against the types of human papillomavirus that most commonly causes cervical cancer.

-more-

MEDIA CONTACTS

Jennifer Sizemore: Sizemore@snhdmail.org | 702.759.1225

Stephanie Bethel: Bethel@snhdmail.org | 702.759.1393

Health District/Pre-Teen Vaccinations – add one

“It is important to remind parents, caregivers and health care providers about the importance of getting pre-teens the appropriate immunizations. We have seen outbreaks of meningitis on college campuses and whooping cough, mumps and measles in communities across the country,” said Bonnie Sorenson, the health district’s director of clinic and nursing services. Most parents do not realize that immunization can wane over time and when their children approach teen years, they are at risk of exposure to illnesses at schools, camps and other new situations.

Whooping cough cases are on the rise in the United States with more than 25,000 cases reported in 2005. Locally, there have been more than 20 cases in each of the last two years. The illness causes a prolonged cough that can last for weeks or months and can result in pneumonia or even hospitalization.

Meningococcal infections can lead to meningitis and, although rare, about 10 percent of the teens who contract it die from it and another 15 percent will have a long-term disability as a result. HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection with about 20 million Americans infected; women have an 80 percent chance of infection by the time they reach age 50. In 2007, approximately 11,000 American women received a cervical cancer diagnosis and more than 3,000 will die from it.

“This is also a terrific time to bring an 11- or 12-year-old into his pediatrician’s office for a check-up to evaluate his immunization status for several other vaccines such as chickenpox, hepatitis B, and measles-mumps-rubella,” said Sorenson.

The CDC and AAP recommend the adolescent office visit and note that many pre-teens do not receive preventive health care but only visit the doctor’s office when they are sick. The pre-teen check-up is an opportunity for pediatricians and family practitioners to perform an overall health and development assessment and to provide parents and their pre-teens with a forum to ask health-related questions, gather nutritional information and other issues about the impending teen years.