Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

NEWS RELEASE

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New health department campaign takes aim at whooping cough

DENVER—A new Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment campaign to raise childhood vaccination rates spotlights recent pertussis outbreaks (also called whooping cough) in Colorado and around the nation.

As part of the campaign, Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper is featured in a new public service announcement promoting the whooping cough vaccine. In the announcement, which can be viewed at http://gannett.wistia.com/m/655DUg, Gov. Hickenlooper discusses how his son once was hospitalized as an infant for two days due to pertussis, a vaccine-preventable disease often referred to as whooping cough.

"When our son was an infant, he spent two nights in the hospital after being exposed to pertussis, or whooping cough," Gov. Hickenlooper explains in the announcement. "This is a very real and very dangerous disease and we're seeing outbreaks nationwide, even here in Colorado. That's why I urge you to protect your kids in the best possible way, by getting them fully immunized."

Nearly 1,300 pertussis cases have been reported nationally, and more are expected. Fourteen pertussis cases recently were confirmed in Greeley. Recent outbreaks underscore the need for childhood pertussis (DTaP) vaccinations. This vaccine provides coverage from diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis.

"We appreciate the governor's support and leadership as we work to improve our childhood vaccination rates," said Dr. Rachel Herlihy, director of the Immunization Section at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. "Vaccines are a safe and cost-effective way to protect our children, and the wider community, from disease. Due to recent outbreaks, whooping cough is a very real risk for children in Colorado."

Infectious disease prevention, specifically for pertussis, is a one of Colorado's 10 Winnable Battles campaign.

The public service announcement, issued by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, will begin airing today.

Information regarding childhood immunizations is easily accessible to parents, thanks to Colorado's parent-focused website, www.ImmunizeForGood.com. At the website, parents can find the latest information on childhood vaccinations, vaccination schedules and additional resources.

For more information on childhood immunization, contact your health care provider. To find a clinic nearby, call 303-692-2229 in the Denver metro area, or toll-free 1-800-688-7777 for clinics outside of Denver.

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