

TheUpshot.*Online*

A publication of the Texas Department of State Health Services Immunization Branch

DSHS Observes National Infant Immunization Week

National infant Immunization Week and Vaccination Week in the Americas Emphasize the Need for Increased Vaccination Rates

By Markel Rojas, Public Information, Education, and Training

This year National Infant Immunization Week (NIIW) will again be held in conjunction with the Pan American Health Organization Vaccination Week in the Americas (VWA) from April 24 – 30. NIIW is set aside annually to focus local and national attention on the importance of vaccinating infants and toddlers 24 months and younger. VWA focuses on the need for routine vaccinations throughout a lifetime.

In the United States and in 35 countries throughout the Americas, there will be activities aimed at raising awareness of the need of infant immunizations.

In Texas, sister-cities along the U. S. Mexico border are planning joint celebrations. Special kick-off events will be held in Las Cruces, New Mexico and Ciudad Juarez Mexico. Other cities will have month-long celebrations. Mayor Elizabeth Flores of Laredo will issue a proclamation designating April as Infant Immunization

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Health Services Regions Observe NIIW and VWA



The Texas Department of State Health Service Central Campus and all the Health Service Regions are planning a variety of events to

commemorate NIIW and VWA. For a complete list of planned events, call your Health Service Region.

Central Campus, Austin. Look for displays throughout the main campus and other DSHS buildings. In the very near future, you will be able to download from the ImmunizeTexas website samples and templates of written materials that can be used for NIIW, VWA, and other immunization awareness events.

Health Service Region 7. Activities include the recognition of Texas Vaccine For Children (TVFC) providers in each county via local newspapers. See *Regions Corner*, page 3.

Health Service Region 8 will be partnering with Schlitterbahn Waterparks to promote the importance of vaccination and with the DSHS Office of Border Health to conduct educational activities.

Health Service Regions 9 and 10 will be working with the El Paso Immunization Coalition and the DSHS Office of Border Health. Activities in local clinics are being planned.

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Rubella No Longer Major Public Health Threat in the United States

from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Media Relations, March 21, 2005

A major public health milestone has been achieved in the United States - the rubella virus, a major cause of serious birth defects such as deafness and blindness, also known as congenital rubella syndrome (CRS), is no longer considered to be a major public health threat in the United States, Dr. Julie Gerberding, director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced at the National Immunization Conference on March 21 in Washington, DC.

"The elimination of rubella in the United States is a tremendous step in protecting the health and well being of pregnant women and infants," said Dr. Gerberding. "A disease that once seriously harmed tens of thousands of infants is no longer a major health threat, thanks to a safe and effective vaccine and successful immunization programs across the country. We should take pride in this accomplishment, and also recognize that we must maintain our vigilance or we can see a resurgence of disease."

Currently about 93 percent of the nation's children under age two are vaccinated against measles, mumps, and rubella, according to the CDC's National Immunization Survey. More than 95 percent of the nation's children are vaccinated against rubella by the time they enter school. "The importance of continuing vaccination cannot be emphasized enough," said Dr. Steve Cochi, Acting Director, CDC's National Immunization Program. "Cases of rubella continue to be brought into the country by worldwide travelers and because of bordering countries where the disease is active."

During 1964 and 1965 a rubella epidemic in the United States caused an estimated 12.5 million

cases of rubella and 20,000 cases of congenital rubella syndrome (CRS), which led to more than 11,600 babies born deaf, 11,250 fetal deaths, 2,100 neonatal deaths, 3,580 babies born blind and 1,800 babies born mentally retarded.

Since reporting of rubella began in 1966, the largest number of rubella cases reported was in 1969 with 57,686 cases. Following vaccine licensure in 1969 and development of a rubella vaccination program to prevent rubella infection during pregnancy, rubella incidence fell rapidly. By 1983, fewer than 1,000 cases were reported per year.

In 1989, CDC established a rubella elimination goal despite a resurgence in rubella and measles cases during the measles epidemic from 1989-1991, reported rubella cases in the 1990s declined to all-time low numbers. From 1990 through 1999, only 117 cases of CRS were reported, 66 of these babies were born in 1990 and 1991. In 2001, for the first time in history, less than 100 cases were reported in the United States. In 2003, there were only eight rubella cases and one CRS case reported in the United States. In 2004, there were only nine rubella cases reported in the United States.

Since the mid-1990s, the United States has worked closely with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and Mexico to improve rubella control in the Americas. Those efforts have resulted in dramatic reductions of rubella in many nations of the Americas. In September 2003, ministers of health of all countries in the Americas resolved to eliminate rubella and CRS by 2010.

Last fall, an independent panel including internationally recognized immunization experts from academia, the Council for State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE), the Advisory

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RegionsCorner

Polk County Partnership

By Peggy Wooten, Social Work Services,
Health Service Region 4/5N

The Livingston Polk County Child Health Community Partnership (PCCHCP) was established in 1996 to provide intervention services for high-risk families, especially those with preschool-aged children. This partnership continues to flourish in Polk County with participation from the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), the University of Texas Medical Branch, the Early Childhood Intervention, the Alabama-Coushatta Reservation Head Start, A-C Social Services, the Livingston Independent School District, Memorial Medical Center, the Memorial Medical Center Auxiliary, and with help from volunteers from many other community organizations. Current projects include child health fairs and immunization clinics and parenting classes held several times throughout the year. Past projects have also included child health staffing and a retrospective survey in county school districts conducted in 2002 to determine baseline immunization levels.

The PCCHCP usually meets every other month. DSHS Social Work staff involved includes Peggy Wooten, as chair, and Mona West, as secretary. LaRue Marshall, RN, from Memorial Medical Center, recruits volunteers for the immunization clinics and orders and manages the vaccine inventory (the partnership is a Texas Vaccines for Children provider). Auxiliary members assist with clinic sign-in and patient routing during clinics. DSHS staff also provide training for volunteers and send out reminder cards to children seen previously at the clinics. At least twenty-five volunteers are available to

help at each clinic and the Polk County Enterprise provides free publicity.

In this very rural corner of deep East Texas, immunizing children in the community is the primary mission of the PCCHCP with the support of the Memorial Medical Center Board and its administrator. Congratulations to this group for a sustained effort to provide services to children!

Smith County Shots Across Texas Coalition

By Donna Freeman, Smith County Medical Alliance, and Donna Goodnight,
Immunization Program,
Health Service Region 4/5N

In 1993, a new immunization initiative was put into law that mandated all Texans should be fully immunized by the age of two years. Shots Across Texas was born as a grassroots community coalition to help the then Texas Department of Health implement that law. The Smith County Medical Alliance adopted this as a project that year in an effort to be a link in the ongoing chain of health care. It was determined that parents face many barriers in seeing that their children are protected against vaccine-preventable diseases. The Smith County Shots Across Texas Coalition was organized under the direction of the Medical Alliance to eliminate those barriers (e.g., language, costs, and convenience) and to educate the community on the risk of *not* immunizing its children.

The group was challenged to draw on community resources, creative ideas, and the time and effort of individuals from various

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organizations in Smith County. Some of those organizations included the Tyler Independent School District, the United Way, the Texas Department of Health, the Smith County Public Health District, the University of Texas (UT) Tyler School of Nursing, the Tyler Junior College School of Nursing, the UT Health Center at Tyler, the East Texas Medical Center Emergency Medical Services, the Kiwanis Clubs, local churches, Dairy Queen, Borden's Milk, Campfire Girls, Robert E. Lee High School students, the Smith County Medical Alliance, the Black Nurses Association, the African American Immunization Project, and the Rotary Clubs.

Currently, core members of the coalition include the Texas Department of State Health Services, the Northeast Texas Public Health District, the UT Health Center at Tyler, FamilyCare Pediatrics/Trinity Mother Frances, and the Tyler Independent School District. Of course, many volunteers from a cross-section of area agencies and other organizations pitch in to ensure the success of the community initiatives.

Since 1994, it has taken hundreds of volunteer hours to provide immunizations in special clinics, resulting in over 10,000 children being immunized! Though the faces in the coalition change, the number one priority of these volunteers continues to be the promotion of health care for children in the community.



Health Service Region Celebrates National Infant Immunization Week

By Lynn Ponsonby, Human Service Technician
Health Service Region 7

Region 7 will be commemorating this year's National Infant Immunization Week (NIIW) by recognizing our Texas Vaccine For Children (TVFC) providers in each county via their local newspapers. The Immunization Program will award TVFC providers this year with certificates for Clinical Assessment Software Application (CASA) results greater than the state rate of 78%. The CASA measures the vaccination rate of children seen in the clinics who received 4 DTaP, 3 Polio, and 1 MMR by 24 months of age.

Other activities will be provided the week of NIIW within the Local Health Departments' areas. Some of those activities include a luncheon to be held at Hillcrest Hospital Banquet Room for all TVFC providers on April 27th. Waco-McLennan County Public Health District will partner with Hillcrest Hospital for this event to honor their TVFC providers. Channel 10 (KWTX), a partner of Hillcrest Hospital, will hold a televised broadcast on the "Hillcrest Health Cast" promoting immunizations on the week of NIIW. Williamson County and City Health District will be holding a special project at the Birkman Independent School District in Round Rock to promote immunization for pre-

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National Infant Immunization Week and Vaccination Week in the Americas Emphasize Need...

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Month. In cooperation with local community groups, their jamboree is held to celebrate National Health Week and provides free food (quesadillas de pollo this year), balloons, face paintings, games such as spin the wheel, age appropriate immunization trivia contests rewarded by goody bags as well as immunizations. The Día del Niño is held in conjunction with NIIW and VWA and is a celebration of children commemorated with prizes, raffles, haircuts, cakes, music, and immunizations.

Local and regional clinics governments will issue proclamations for NIIW and VWA. Many local and regional clinics and health care providers are participating in the celebration of NIIW and VWA by sponsoring a variety of child-oriented fun activities as well as providing immunizations and information about immunizations. In Richmond, Texas the Pilgrim Journey Baptist Church Health Team, will host a forum for parents and caregivers to discuss immunizations and the importance of immunizing on time. The events around the state will be fun and festive. There will be balloons, free gifts, free snacks, face painting, poster contests, etc. In addition, in most cities throughout the state local health departments and local private providers will be available to check immunization records to make sure that children are up to date on all vaccines. Additional information on NIIW and VWA can be found at www.immunizeTexas.com. ◆

Regions Corner

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kindergarten children. Brazos County Health Department will recognize their TVFC providers in their local newspaper. Travis County will promote NIIW with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention- sponsored NIIW public service announcement at local television stations (five stations). The promotion and delivery of immunizations at two Women, Infants, and Children clinics will be held on April 27. Michael Pichicero, Professor of Microbiology and Immunology at the University of Rochester Medical Center, will discuss the future of immunizations.

Answers from page 11: 1 (f); 2 (e); 3 (a); 4 (g); 5 (b); 6 (c); 7 (d), also known as tetanos)

New Employee Corner



Cheryl Bowcock ♦ *Epidemiologist*

Program Evaluation & Data Coordination- Disease Prevention & Intervention Section

Cheryl tells us: "I've worked at DSHS for a total of 17 years. Most recently, I worked for a year in the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, then, I spent 5 years working for the Texas Cancer Registry. I've worked for more than 20 years in the public health research arena and recently earned a Master's degree in public health. I am now an Epidemiologist in the Services and Data Coordination Group, providing support to the Immunization Branch. I am married and my husband, David, and I enjoy playing with and spoiling our 4 feline kids." ♦

Markel Rojas ♦ *Program Specialist*

Public Information, Education & Training Group

Una Markel, a registered dietician, tells us: "I have worked at the local health department level with WIC and pediatric and geriatric nutrition programs. At PIET, I work in education and produce educational materials and programs. I have been in different areas of the country (the Midwest, Southwest, North East, and Northwest), but I am very happy to stay in Austin." ♦



Arthur Lara ♦ *Program Specialist*

ImmTrac Group

Arthur has worked with the DSHS IT group for several years and has supported ImmTrac and the Immunization Branch on network issues, technical customer support, and other technical matters. In his ImmTrac position, Arthur will be working with health plans, providers, and other entities to facilitate electronic import of immunization data to the registry. Arthur will have responsibility for ImmTrac data security and data quality, and will plan and conduct user testing of application enhancements.

Arthus tells us: "I live in Hutto and I have been married to my wife Lucy going on 9 years now and we have 3 children: Vincent 7, Adam 5, and Isabelle 4. I am a former U.S. Marine who enjoys fishing, baseball, computing, and computer gaming." ♦



Codie Prinz ♦ *Team Lead, Regions 1, 2/3*

Vaccine Services Group

Anita Freeman ♦ Program Specialist

Technical Assistance & Capacity Building Team

Anita Freeman has worked with the State for over 17 years (Southwest Texas State University, University of Texas at Austin, TDH Public Health Region 8, State Office-Children with Special Health Care Needs and Immunization). She is an Advance Practice Nurse and Clinical Nurse Specialist in Pediatrics. She currently works as a Team Leader with Jack Sims and her duties include working with contractors to provide immunization services.



Anita has been married for 34 years to the same guy! She loves miniature schnauzers, gardening, and long Sunday drives in the country. ♦

Cheryl Seeman ♦ Program Specialist

ImmTrac Group

Cheryl has spent the past 20 years working for or with technology companies in a variety of senior-level marketing positions. She started the sales and marketing department at a one software company and managed partner and channel programs at several other software and hardware companies. As an account supervisor at two advertising agencies Cheryl developed and implemented marketing campaigns that included training, public relations, promotional events, general advertising, research, collateral, and web sites.

Her favorite hobby is golf and she loves to travel. Cheryl enjoys spoiling her 2 grandkids and spending time with friends. ♦



Janie Delgado ♦ Public Health Technician
ImmTrac Group

“¡Hola! My name is Janie Delgado. My previous work experience includes being a community worker at the Immunization Department with the City of Austin Department of Health and Austin Independent School District, striving to improve immunization for school-aged children. I am currently with ImmTrac, where I am a program technician and work with both the Program Coordination and the Record Management teams.

What I love about my present job is the opportunity I get to meet the people I have already e-mailed or spoken with on the phone at DSHS. Not only were they very helpful when I needed it, they are incredible. It’s great to be part of the DSHS team!” ♦

Cheryl Rainosek ♦ Public Health Technician

Disease Prevention & Intervention Section

Cheryl tells us: “Before coming to Immunizations, I worked in Grants Management for 16 years and the ASC for almost a year (I always wanted to work in Immunization!!!). My background, would be financial: working on federal grants, grant reporting, and tracking expenditures and budgets.

Curently, I am trying to help the programs with their budgets or with any problems with payments, researching when someone hasn't received their payments, and tracking the expenditures of contractors. I am trying to be a resource for our programs when they have problems, I want to be the one to fix the problem or help and get them an answer.....



I enjoy the simple things, just spending time with my family. My husband Joe (also works for DSHS) and I have two children, who we are VERY proud of, a daughter Riley, she is 15, and a son, Kyle he is 11. They keep me busy!!!" ♦

María Maldonado ♦ Program Specialist

Public Information, Education & Training

María comes from the DSHS Infectious Disease Control Unit. She has been a technical writer and health educator for almost 20 years. Her duties with PiET include developing a Spanish-language component for the education program. She is looking forward to applying her years of experience into the development of the statewide immunization education program. Outside DSHS, she enjoys miniatures and is mostly referred to as Jackie's mom. ♦

Rubella No Longer Major Public Health Threat...

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Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), Mexico and the CDC concluded that rubella virus is no longer endemic in the United States.

Rubella is prevented through vaccination. Rubella vaccine is recommended for all children and for adolescents and adults without documented evidence of immunity. It is especially important to verify that all women of child-bearing age are immune to rubella before they get pregnant.

Although it is available as a single preparation, it is recommended that rubella vaccine be given as MMR vaccine (protecting against measles, mumps and rubella). The first dose of MMR should be given on or after the first birthday; the recommended range is from 12-15 months. The second dose is usually given when the child is 4-6 years old, or before he or she enters kindergarten or first grade. Maintaining high coverage and rubella population immunity in the United States among children and adults will be important to maintain the benefits of achieving rubella elimination. ♦

Training *Calendar*

Current Issues in Immunization NetConferences

Date: Thursday, April 14, 2005

Time: 11:00 am - 12:00 pm

Location: At your PC with a telephone line

Course Number: EV0378

Immunization NetConferences are live, 1-hour presentations combining an online visual presentation with simultaneous audio via telephone conference call and a live question and answer session.

The National Immunization Program is pleased to present a teleconference program titled "Current Issues in Immunization." This program is designed to provide clinicians with the most up-to-date information on immunization.

The one-hour session will focus on emerging immunization topics. The session topics will focus on the following:

- New Recommendations for Meningococcal Vaccine
- Influenza Update

This program will combine a telephone audio conference with simultaneous online visual content. It will allow for a question and answer segment both by telephone and via the Internet. Internet access and a separate phone line are needed to participate. Graphics will be available to download as a Power Point file after the presentations.

Instructions and System Requirements

- An Internet connection
- A phone line for the audio portion of your call
- Microsoft Internet Explorer 5.x and above or Netscape Navigator 4.5 through 4.8
- 166 MHz Pentium-based PC with Windows® 95, 98, Windows ® NT, XP, or 2000
- 64 MB RAM
- 56k or faster (Participants may join at 28.8, though it is not recommended)
- 800x600 pixel resolution or greater (1024x768 pixels recommended)

Contact Person: kathryn.johnson@dshs.state.tx.us, or (512) 458-7111, extension 6321.



Hallmark Cards Help Raise Immunization Awareness

by Tony Martinez, Public Information, Education, and Training



The Department of State Health Services Immunization Branch has continued its partnership with Hallmark Cards, Inc. in the Immunization Greeting Card Program. As part of its commitment to America's Promise-The Alliance for Youth, Hallmark Card, Inc. is providing infant immunization reminder cards to state health departments to distribute to new parents throughout the United States and its territories. The purpose of the cards is to remind

parents to get their babies immunized, which will keep them safe from vaccine-preventable diseases. The Immunization Branch is part of a national effort involving many other states that have experienced improvements in their immunization rates with the help of this program.

Governor Rick Perry and First Lady Anita Perry sign the Hallmark Cards that will be distributed throughout Texas. We encourage health care providers, hospitals, birthing centers, and midwives to order these cards, free of charge, so they can be distributed to parents of newborn Texans.

To order Hallmark Cards, simply send your request via email to Tony.Martinez@dshs.state.tx.us. Please include your name, the name of your facility, address, city, state, zip. ♦

Online Vaccine Safety Information

By Julie Townsend

Services and Data Coordination Group, DSHS Austin

Information on vaccine safety and the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) has been updated on the DSHS Immunization Branch website (www.immunizetexas.com). The website has been updated to provide more information and resources on current and emerging vaccine safety issues. Parents and healthcare providers will find vaccine safety information and resources tailored individually to their needs. Visitors to the Vaccine Safety Main Page will find information under the following headings: Background Information on the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS), Vaccine Adverse Event Prevention, National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program, Resources for Healthcare Providers, Resources for Parents, Vaccine Safety Websites, and Vaccine Safety Issues of Interest. Links are provided to vaccine safety websites that provide valid scientific information. ♦

Trivia Corner ¡en español!

Can you match the vaccine-preventable diseases in both languages?

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Sarampión | a. Influenza |
| 2. Paperas | b. Pneumococcal diseases |
| 3. Gripe | c. Rubella |
| 4. Tos ferina | d. Tetanus |
| 5. Enfermedades neumocócicas | e. Mumps |
| 6. Rubéola | f. Measles |
| 7. Trismo | g. Whooping cough |

Answers on page 5.

TheUpshot♦Online is published quarterly by the Texas Department of State Health Services Immunization Branch. Please submit your comments and suggestions to Maria.Maldonado@dshs.state.tx.us. For instructions on how to submit articles, please call (512) 458-7111, extension 2194.



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