



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 10-20-10**

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## **New vaccination requirement reminder**

Ithaca, Stanton, St. Johns- Mid-Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD) would like to remind parents and guardians of the new vaccination requirements that took effect with the 2010-2011 school year.

The new rules apply to all sixth grade students, children entering kindergarten, and all students changing school districts. As part of the new rules, these students are required to receive two doses of varicella vaccine, or a history of having the chickenpox disease. In addition, all children 11 to 18 years of age who are changing school districts, or who are entering the sixth grade, are required to receive one dose of meningococcal vaccine and one dose of tetanus/diphtheria/acellular pertussis (Tdap) vaccine.

School districts are required to have 90 percent of pupils with completed or appropriately waived immunization records. School districts not in compliance by November 1, 2010 will be subject to withholding of five percent of their state school aid funds.

These vaccination rule changes were designed to help prevent school-aged children from contracting potentially deadly illnesses such as meningitis and pertussis (whooping cough).

In the last few years, Michigan has seen a significant increase in pertussis, and it is hoped that the new rule will help lower the number of cases. In the years 2003-2007 the average number of pertussis cases reported was about 340. In 2008, 315 cases were reported. That number jumped to 902 cases in 2009, and so far this year, about 560 cases.

“Childhood immunizations continue to be one of the best ways for parents and guardians to protect children against vaccine-preventable diseases,” said Kimberly Singh, Health Officer for MMDHD.

And yet, each year, hundreds of children in Michigan become ill from diseases that could have been prevented. Infants who are too young to be fully vaccinated are especially vulnerable to diseases that could be passed from school-aged brothers and sisters. That is why it is so important to protect the entire family through immunizations.

Families with insurance that covers the costs associated with vaccinations are encouraged to contact their child’s health care provider as soon as possible to bring their vaccinations up-to-date. Those with Medicaid, or those without insurance or vaccination coverage should contact MMDHD at:

Clinton County Branch Office: 989-224-2195

Gratiot County Branch Office: 989-875-3681

Montcalm County Branch Office: 989-831-5237

*Mid-Michigan District Health Department serves the residents of Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm Counties.*

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