

CITY OF BALTIMORE

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Immunization Key to Children's Health

Health Department recognizes nine practices for their vaccination efforts during National Infant Immunization Week (NIIW) April 21st thru April 28th

BALTIMORE, MD (April 26, 2007)— This afternoon, Dr. Joshua Sharfstein, Baltimore City's Commissioner of Health, will celebrate the contributions of immunization to public health. The ceremony is at the Eastern Health District, 620 North Caroline St. at 12:30 p.m. The purpose is to highlight the need for all young children to be fully immunized and recognize pediatric practices with excellent immunization programs.

NIIW was established in 1994 and is observed in Latin America as well as the United States. It is a national effort to educate parents, caregivers, providers, and communities on the importance of timely infant immunization.

Children need over 80 percent of their vaccinations in the first 24 months of life to protect them against disease, disability, and even death. Immunizations are safe and protect our families and communities, making them one of our most cost-effective public health strategies.

More than 900,000 of our nation's children are not fully immunized; each day over 11,000 children are born, every one in need of protection from vaccine preventable diseases before the age of two. For 2005-6, the Centers for Disease Control's National Immunization Survey notes that Baltimore City's coverage rate for preschool children receiving the 4:3:1:3:3:1 combination of age-appropriate shots (≥ 4 doses of diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis vaccine; ≥ 3 doses of polio vaccine; ≥ 1 dose of any measles-containing vaccine; 3 doses of hepatitis B vaccine; 3 doses of HIB vaccine; and ≥ 1 dose of chickenpox vaccine) is 78.9%. This is the highest of 8 major metro areas in the nation, including: Baltimore; Chicago; Detroit;

Houston; Los Angeles; Newark, NJ; New York City; and Philadelphia. Baltimore exceeds the national average for the vaccine series as well as protection against pneumonia (88.5%); hepatitis B (93.2%); chickenpox (91.9%); and measles (92.7%).

In recognition of the key role that health care providers play in achieving this success, The Fourth Annual “Best Immunization Practice” Award will be presented to eight practices. The criteria for selection are: (1) vaccination coverage rates for children less than three years of age; (2) early adoption of new vaccines and vaccination schedules; (3) compliance with CDC's "Standards for Child and Adolescent Immunization"; and (4) compliance in reporting to the Baltimore Immunization Registry Program.

The winners of the award are:

1. Dr. Ralph Brown
2. Dr. Steven Caplan
3. The Family Health Centers of Baltimore – Calvert Street, represented by Dr. Charles Shubin
4. Johns Hopkins Community Physicians at Tindoco, represented by Dr. Catherine Parrish
5. Johns Hopkins Hospital Harriet Lane Primary Care Clinic, represented by Dr. George Siberry
6. Kaiser Permanent at City Plaza, represented by Dr. Richard Dietrich
7. Total Health Care at Division Street, represented by Ms. Denotta Teagle
8. Total Health Care at Mondawmin, represented by Ms. Genevieve Mack

“It’s health care practices like these that help us prevent serious illness. Immunization is a central part of our commitment to protecting our Baltimore City’s children” stated Dr. Sharfstein.

Parents who believe their preschoolers have had all their immunizations are often surprised to find that they are missing shots when their records are examined. Parents should check their child’s shot record and speak with their health care provider to be sure the child is properly protected. If a child does not have a provider, the family can call their local health department for assistance. Baltimore City residents should contact the Health Department’s Bureau of Child Health and Immunization at 410-396-4454.

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