News Release

Kingsford, Michigan – April 16, 2013. The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department announced that National Infant Immunization Week (NIIW), April 20-27, 2013, is an annual observance to highlight the importance of protecting infants from vaccine-preventable diseases and celebrate the achievements of immunization programs and their partners in promoting healthy communities. Since 1994, NIIW has served as a call to action for parents, caregivers, and healthcare providers to ensure that infants are fully immunized against 14 vaccine-preventable diseases.

Parents agree that feeding and sleep schedules are important to help keep their children healthy. The same goes for childhood immunizations. Vaccinating children on time is the best way to protect them against 14 serious and potentially deadly diseases before their second birthday.

“The recommended immunization schedule is designed to offer protection early in life,” said Joyce Ziegler, Community Health Services Director, at the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department, “when babies are vulnerable and before it’s likely they will be exposed to diseases.”

Public health and medical experts base their vaccine recommendations on many factors. They study information about diseases and vaccines very carefully to decide which vaccines kids should get and when they should get them for best protection.

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Although the number of vaccines a child needs in the first two years may seem like a lot, doctors know a great deal about the human immune system, and they know that a healthy baby’s immune system can handle getting all vaccines when they are recommended. Ms. Ziegler cautions against parents delaying vaccination. “There is no known benefit to delaying vaccination. In fact, it puts babies at risk of getting sick because they are left vulnerable to catch serious diseases during the time they are not protected by vaccines.”

When parents choose not to vaccinate or to follow a delayed schedule, children are left unprotected against diseases that still circulate in this country, like measles and whooping cough. In 2010, more than 27,000 cases of whooping cough were reported nationally with 27 deaths – 25 of which were infants.

For more information or to schedule an appointment for immunizations, please call the Health Department at (906) 774-1868 or (906) 265-9913.

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