



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WHOOPING COUGH VACCINATIONS PROTECT INFANTS *Region's Pertussis Case Total at 433 for 2011*

For the first time in 20 years, no whooping cough deaths were reported in the state, according to the California Department of Public Health. The good news is credited to statewide vaccination efforts last year, but local health officials also want to remind the public that pertussis is still active in the county.

Locally a total of 433 whooping cough cases, including the one below, were reported in 2011 with no new cases reported yet for 2012, County Health and Human Services Agency officials said today. A 9-year-old child, who was up-to-date with immunizations, was diagnosed with whooping cough and attended two school programs during the time the child was infectious: Carlton Oaks Elementary School in the Santee School District and the Literacy First Junior Academy in El Cajon.

"Pertussis can be deadly to infants. Take every precaution to ensure children, as well as household members and caregivers to infants, are properly immunized against contagious diseases like whooping cough," said Wilma Wooten, M.D., M.P.H., County Public Health Officer. "Increased vaccination efforts across the state contributed to saving the lives of infants last year in California."

During the 2010 epidemic, 10 infants died in California including 2 from San Diego County. A record 1,144 cases were also reported in the region.

Parents can obtain the vaccine series and the Tdap booster shot for their children through their primary care physicians. Students who are not covered by a medical insurance plan can get the shot from a local retail pharmacy for a fee, or from a County Public Health Center.

A typical case of pertussis starts with a cough and runny nose for one to two weeks, followed by weeks to months of rapid coughing fits that sometimes end with a whooping sound. Fever, if present, is usually mild. The disease is treatable with antibiotics.

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For more information about whooping cough and ongoing vaccination clinics, call the HHS
Immunization Branch at (866) 358-2966, or visit www.sdiz.org.

The 2011 year-end total for cases is not yet complete because additional year-end cases are still being reported.

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