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Western New York Public Health Alliance Press Release – The Importance of Vaccination

The Western New York Public Health Alliance (WNYPHA) is a not-for-profit organization comprised of the Public Health Directors and other community public health leaders from the eight counties of western New York. Their mission is to support collaboration across WNY to further public health initiatives and priorities. As part of their mission, WNYPHA wants to raise awareness about the importance of vaccines. Vaccines are among the most successful and cost-effective public health tools available for preventing disease and death. Health officials around the nation remind parents to protect their children’s health by immunizing them against vaccine-preventable childhood diseases.

Thanks to the development of safe and effective vaccines, immunization has been one of the most successful and safest public health measures available to populations worldwide, with an unparalleled record of disease reduction and prevention. Our nation’s scientifically-based vaccine safety system – which is managed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and monitored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) – carefully studies, evaluates and monitors vaccine safety and efficacy. Yet, despite the success and strong safety record of vaccines, vaccine hesitancy has been increasing. This threatens local public health by producing an environment where vaccine-preventable diseases such as measles, mumps and pertussis (whooping cough) are on the rise.

“Before age two, all infants can and should be vaccinated against 14 preventable childhood diseases like whooping cough and measles,” said Christine Schuyler, Chautauqua County Public Health Director, the co-Chair of the WNYPHA. “Immunization is a shared responsibility and together, we can help protect our babies and the entire community by preventing and reducing the spread of infectious diseases.”

All parents are encouraged to have their children immunized by their pediatrician or contact their local Health Department for information on how to receive vaccinations. The Vaccines for Children (VFC) and the Vaccine for Adults (VFA) programs provide vaccines to children and adults who are underinsured and may not be able to afford them.

“Maintaining high immunization rates by vaccinating on time, every time is the key to keeping dangerous diseases away from our communities,” said Schuyler.

To find out what vaccines your child needs and when, ask your healthcare provider, visit the New York State Department of Health website at www.health.ny.gov or call your local Health Department. Additional information is available online at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents or via phone at 800-CDC-INFO ([800-232-4636](tel:800-232-4636)).