



## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

August 5, 2019

**CONTACT:**

Melaney Arnold – 217-558-0500

[melaney.arnold@illinois.gov](mailto:melaney.arnold@illinois.gov)

### **#VaxToSchool – Schedule Vaccinations Now During National Immunization Awareness Month**

*You have the power to prevent disease*

**SPRINGFIELD** – It is time to get kids ready for #VaxToSchool. As the upcoming school year quickly approaches and you start on your back-to-school plans, make sure your kids are up-to-date on their required vaccinations. Use the hashtag #VaxToSchool on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to encourage others to do the same.

“We are currently seeing the greatest number of measles cases reported in the United States since 1992, and since measles was declared eliminated in 2000,” said Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike. “This record number of cases is a reminder of the importance of continued vaccination. Help kids stay healthy as they head #VaxToSchool and make sure they are protected from 14 vaccine preventable diseases.”

The immunization requirements for the 2019-2020 school year are the same as last year. The requirements can be found on the [IDPH website](#) under immunizations. It is important to remember that students who are not vaccinated and do not have proof of immunity will be excluded from school if there is a disease outbreak. Help spread the word using #VaxToSchool.

IDPH continues to work with its partners to identify barriers to vaccination and how to eliminate them. Recent IDPH actions include:

- **COMMUNITY GRANTS:** IDPH has issued \$3.5 million in grants to local health departments across the state to increase awareness campaigns and help build infrastructure so that it is easier to get vaccinated.
- **MOBILE UNITS:** IDPH has provided its Wellness on Wheels (WOW) mobile unit to organizations around the state to host vaccination events. The WOW will be at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield to provide free vaccinations.
  - Interested organizations can e-mail [dph.cmhs.info@illinois.gov](mailto:dph.cmhs.info@illinois.gov) or call 217-785-4311 for more information. Organizations can fill out the [Wellness on Wheels Mobile Request Form](#) to request a WOW mobile unit.

-more-

Find us on Facebook at [Facebook.com/IDPH.Illinois](https://www.facebook.com/IDPH.Illinois) or follow us on Twitter @IDPH

Nationally Accredited by PHAB



- **DIRECT OUTREACH:** IDPH has committed approximately \$850,000 since May 2019 to promote vaccine requirements for children ages 0-18 years, build partnerships with community-based organizations, use social media to increase vaccination levels, create targeted interventions to address areas with low vaccine coverage, and implement prioritized activities to reduce and eliminate disparities. IDPH continues to meet with faith-based organizations, local health departments, and schools to identify potential barriers to childhood vaccinations and how to eliminate them.
- **VACCINE AVAILABILITY:** IDPH and the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services recently recombined the Children's Health Insurance Plan program with the Vaccines For Children (VFC) program to increase vaccine availability. Ordering vaccines for CHIP-eligible children through the VFC program will increase the number of providers for these vital services and help ensure vaccines are more readily available for low-income children.

Vaccines are not just for kids, however. Vaccines are recommended throughout our lives. During National Immunization Awareness Month, IDPH is asking everyone to check their vaccination history and talk with their health care provider. Adults should get flu vaccine each year and receive a Td (tetanus and diphtheria) booster vaccine or Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis) every 10 years. Tdap is also recommended for pregnant women during each pregnancy. Adults 50 years and older are recommended to receive the shingles vaccine. Adults 65 and older are also recommended to receive both pneumococcal vaccines. Some adults younger than 65 years with certain conditions are also recommended to receive one or more pneumococcal vaccinations. Adults may need other vaccines (such as hepatitis A and B) depending on their age, if pregnant, occupation, travel, medical conditions, vaccinations they have already received, or other considerations.

For more information about immunizations, including [vaccination schedules](#) for infants, children, teens and adults, visit <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/prevention-wellness/immunization>. Adults can also take a vaccine quiz to see what vaccines are recommended at <https://www2.cdc.gov/nip/adultimmsched/>.

Families who need help paying for childhood vaccines should ask their health care professional about the Vaccines for Children program, which provides vaccines at no cost to eligible children who do not otherwise have access to recommended childhood vaccines. For information, call 312-746-6050 in Chicago or 217-785-1455 for the rest of the state.

Help raise awareness about the importance of vaccination and encourage families to get their children vaccinated by using #VaxToSchool.

###