Genesee County Health Department

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RE: The Importance of Immunizations

Recently, measles, pertussis and other communicable diseases have been making media headlines. The Genesee County Health Department would like to remind everyone of the importance of immunizations and the role they play in ensuring public health. Immunizations have contributed significantly to our improved life expectancy. When a large percentage of the population is vaccinated, the spread of a disease is limited. This indirectly protects unimmunized individuals, including those who cannot be vaccinated because of their age or a health condition. This is the principle of herd immunity.

When herd immunity is in place, it makes it harder to spread disease. As the number of vaccinated people increases, the protective effect of herd immunity increases. When only a small percentage of the population is vaccinated, the risk of a disease outbreak is greater than when many are vaccinated.

The maturity and strength of an individual's immune system has an impact on their risk of disease. Young children, senior citizens and those with compromised immune systems are at higher risk when exposed to infectious disease. Having more people who are vaccinated lowers the risk to these groups. Immunizations not only protect you and your loved ones, they protect those most vulnerable individuals in our community.

We encourage you to make sure you and your loved ones are appropriately immunized. If you have questions, consult with your health care provider or pharmacist. For more information regarding immunizations and immunization schedules, visit our website at www.gchd.us. Our motto is "*Better Life through Better Health.*"