

Mark Valacak, MPH
Health Officer



Gary K. Johnson, MD, MPH
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: August 7, 2017

END DATE: August 13, 2017

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RE: **Pertussis Is Not A Thing Of The Past**

Whooping cough, also known as pertussis, is often thought of as a disease of the past. While we no longer see the number of cases in the United States or Genesee County as we did before pertussis vaccines were available, it is a growing health concern in this country, and it is preventable. "During pregnancy, mothers need to know that the best protection they can give their newborn baby is to get a dose of Tdap during pregnancy between 27 and 36 weeks. This develops antibodies that protect and are then passed on to her baby before birth," stated Genesee County Health Department Public Health Supervisor, Mary Baird.

Infants and young children are the most vulnerable to pertussis and get very sick or die. Up to 20 babies die each year in the United States due to pertussis. In 2016 there were over 100 cases of pertussis in the state of Michigan. "These 100 cases could have been avoided through a simple Tdap vaccination," said Genesee County Health Department Medical Director, Doctor Gary Johnson.

"We know that the whooping cough vaccine works," stated Director and Genesee County Health Department Health Officer, Mark Valacak. While pertussis is not as prevalent in the United States as it once was, the Health Department keeps a watchful eye over Genesee County for the disease," stated Valacak. It is our job.

The Health Department offers off-site vaccination clinics at health fairs, at its WIC clinic on Saginaw Street, businesses, senior centers, schools, and partner with other local organizations. Genesee County Health Department makes it easy and affordable. Last year alone the Health Department attended 217 clinics and provided 482 life-saving Tdap vaccines at offsite clinics throughout Genesee County.

Genesee County Health Department (GCHD) also breaks down perceived barriers that keep parents from getting themselves and their children vaccinated. If you don't have health insurance, need an evening appointment, a ride to the clinic, or if a client is unsure of their vaccine status, GCHD can help. Clients can go online to request an appointment, or call: 810.237.4540 or 810.237.4569. If you need a ride to a medical appointment, contact MTA's Ride to Wellness program for assistance. Genesee County Health Department's Burton Health Clinic is at G-3373 South Saginaw Street, Burton. You can find a list of August off-site clinics at www.gchd.us.

Genesee County Health Department. Your Health. Our Work.

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