HALDANE

Megan Shields <mshields@haldaneschool.org>

Required Vaccines Reminder

1 message

Megan Shields <connect@haldaneschool.org> Tue, Aug 27, 2024 at 3:20 PM
Reply-To: Megan Shields <connect@haldaneschool.org>
To: mshields@haldaneschool.org

Putnam County Press Release

Vaccination Time Arrives, as School Days Return

BREWSTER, NY—With the first day of school just weeks away, scheduling a check-up with a child's healthcare provider for any necessary vaccines is on top of many parents' to-do lists. Proof of up-to-date vaccinations must be provided for all school-goers from pre-K through 12th grade within 14 days of the first day. Children who are unvaccinated at the start of school must receive at least the first dose of all the required vaccines within the first 14 days of school to attend. All follow-up vaccines in a series must be completed on time also, with only a 14-day grace period. This applies to all public, private and religious schools, unless a valid medical exemption exists. A medical exemption is only granted if the child has a medical condition that prevents them from getting vaccinated.

"We want to maintain and enhance community-level protection against serious childhood diseases," said Michael J. Nesheiwat, MD, Putnam County's interim health commissioner. "Children are exposed to viruses and other germs, likely thousands each day, through the toys they play with, the air they breathe, and even the food they eat. Safe and effective vaccines have helped to ensure children avoid major complications from vaccine-preventable diseases, including disability or even death."

Early childhood vaccination rates in Putnam County fluctuate from year to year. Since 2016, the rate has dipped and risen twice, ranging from a low of 59.7% in 2018 to a high of 70.8% in 2019. The good news is that in 2022, the most recent year with data, the rate rose by almost 5 percent from the previous year to 67.8 percent. Even with this increase, Putnam remains below the benchmark of 70.5 percent set by the guidelines of New York State Prevention Agenda.

"A decline in vaccine rates makes outbreaks of diseases like measles more likely," continued Dr. Nesheiwat. "This is exactly what happened during the 2018/2019 school year when the largest US outbreak in recent times happened here in the Hudson Valley. Fortunately, Putnam was largely protected because our vaccination rates were higher than the surrounding counties where particular communities had lower percentages."

Putnam's less than optimal 2021 early childhood vaccination rate was noted in the last comprehensive community health assessment and steered the health department and its community partners to select early childhood vaccination as a top priority, and to plan an intervention to improve the numbers.

The health department's epidemiologist, Alison Kaufman, DVM, MPH, described the efforts taken by the health department partnering with pediatric practices, saying, "The intervention focuses on children between the ages of two and five years, prior to the initiation of vaccination requirements for school attendance. We are working with Putnam's pediatric practices to increase their use of tools available in the New York State Immunization Information System, the database we call 'NYSIIS,' to let parents and caregivers know when vaccines are due. The intervention is ongoing, but we have already found the need to systematically check the data entered into NYSIIS to improve its quality so that the vaccination rates that result are more accurate.

We have also discovered there is a measurable benefit to the regular use of reminder notifications. The long-term goal is for pediatric practices to incorporate these intervention protocols into their routine work."

Dr. Nesheiwat encouraged families to call and visit their personal health care providers soon to schedule their children's immunizations since this is a busy time of year for many health care practices. He said that "No child will be refused vaccination because of an inability to pay. Through our "Vaccines for Children" program at the health department, we can provide all the vaccines that make up the early vaccination series." Included in this program, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year, are the five vaccinations required for day care, pre-K, and school attendance (diphtheria and tetanus; hepatitis B; polio; measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR); and varicella or chickenpox) plus two additional vaccines required for day care and pre-K. To learn more about childhood vaccines and eligibility at the health department, call 845-808-1332.

Dr. Nesheiwat also noted that flu vaccines will again be provided to school children in their schools by the health department. The school-based vaccine schedule starts September 25 and runs through November 13, and the required parental consent forms are available from the school. Residents can see when public health nurses will visit each school by visiting this page—https://www.putnamcountyny.gov/fluclinic —and scrolling down to "School Information."

The mission of the Putnam County Department of Health is to improve and protect the health of the Putnam County community. The department, nationally accredited by the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) through 2029, serves a community composed of nearly 100,000 residents. Core services are provided through a lens of equity, and include community health assessment, disease surveillance and control, emergency preparedness, environmental health protection, family health promotion and health education. For more information, please visit the County website at www.putnamcountyny.gov, or visit our social media sites on Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter) and Instagram @PutnamHealthNY.

###

To view the NYS school vaccine requirements in detail, visit: https://health.ny.gov/prevention/immunization/schools/school_vaccines/

Haldane Central School District would like to continue connecting with you via email. If you prefer to be removed from our list, please contact Haldane Central School District directly. To stop receiving all email messages distributed through our SchoolMessenger service, follow this link and confirm: Unsubscribe

SchoolMessenger is a notification service used by the nation's leading school systems to connect with parents, students and staff through voice, SMS text, email, and social media.