



Every Child By Two
Carter/Bumpers Champions For Immunization

Oregon health providers, organizations, individuals and companies sign open letter stressing importance of immunizations

Groups emphasize vaccination for children

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Aug. 3, 2010 (OREGON) - In honor of National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM) and back-to-school season, Every Child By Two and the Oregon Immunization Program have issued an open letter in support of immunizations. So far, over 140 Oregon health care providers, hospitals, clinics, public health departments and companies have signed the letter, which serves as a reminder to Oregonians of the importance of vaccinating themselves and their children against potentially life-threatening diseases.

“Most Oregonians get themselves and their children immunized,” says Amy Pisani, executive director of Every Child By Two, “but in 2009, there were 284 cases of whooping cough reported in Oregon. This letter has the power to save lives by spreading the word about the life-saving power of timely vaccines.”

While most Oregonians vaccinate, the state has a rising rate of kindergarteners who have exemptions for some or all of their vaccines. When children don't receive their vaccinations on time, they risk passing infectious diseases to others, including immune-challenged children and infants who have yet to complete their first series of immunizations.

“Serious vaccine-preventable diseases are still out there, and immunization is a safe and effective way to prevent them,” says Paul Cieslak, MD, epidemiologist for Oregon Public Health. “We think that parents who bring their children in for their shots are doing the right thing for their children and for their communities.”

Oregonians who want to help increase awareness about the importance of timely immunizations for all ages can endorse the open letter, available on the Oregon Department of Human Services website, <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/imm/openletter.shtml>.

If you are interested in endorsing the open letter, please email Susan Wickstrom at susan.d.wickstrom@state.or.us. If you require further information, please contact Amy Pisani from Every Child By Two at amyp@ecbt.org.

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Every Child By Two, Carter/Bumpers Champions for Immunization, works to ensure that all children receive timely immunizations and continues to seek methods to institutionalize vaccine delivery and ensure access to vaccines for all children.

Oregon Immunization Program provides leadership to prevent and mitigate vaccine-preventable disease.

August is recognized as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Immunization Awareness Month. The goal of NIAM is to increase awareness about immunizations for all ages.

For more information, please visit www.ecbt.org, www.vaccinateyourbaby.org, <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/imm> and <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niam/>.