

M. Jodi Rell Archived Website

CT Leads Nation in Child Immunization Rates for Second Consecutive Year

Hartford - Lt. Governor Jodi Rell today announced that Connecticut leads the nation, for the second consecutive year, in immunization levels of the most critical vaccines for pre-school children.

According to results from the National Immunization Survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 91% of Connecticut's pre-school children are immunized against the major diseases of pertussis (whooping cough), polio, measles, mumps rubella, tetanus and diphtheria. The national immunization average is much lower -- at 78%, reported the CDC.

"I am proud that Connecticut is a national leader in ensuring that children are properly immunized," said Lt. Governor Rell.

"The benefits of early childhood vaccination are well documented and well-known," she said. "That's why it's so important that we continue our efforts to immunize all our children, and to protect them from potentially deadly, yet largely preventable, diseases."

Connecticut's immunization rate rose from 88% in July of 1997 to 91% in February of 1998. No other state has an immunization rate greater than 88%.

For each individual vaccine, Connecticut's immunization rates were 4% to 10% higher than the national averages. The state's rates are also 15% to 25% greater than they were in the late 1980s before the national outbreak of measles.

Following the national measles outbreak, the Childhood Immunization Initiative (CII) was established, with a goal of having each state meet or exceed a 90% immunization rate for complete immunization coverage by the year 2000. Connecticut is the only state so far that has exceeded the CII benchmark.

Department of Public Health (DPH) Commissioner Stephen A. Harriman attributed the high rates to collaborative efforts over the past five years among professional, private and community-based organizations -- including local health departments and the Commission on Children -- who have worked with DPH to improve early childhood wellness.

"Every Connecticut child is precious," said the Lt. Governor. "Every step we take today to protect them, nurture them and ensure their health is a wise and loving investment in tomorrow," she concluded.

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