



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

June 10, 2009

CONTACT: Tom Christensen (619) 515-6535

THREE NEW LOCAL CASES OF WHOOPING COUGH *Notification Letters Sent to Parents*

Three new cases of pertussis, commonly referred to as whooping cough, have been diagnosed in the County of San Diego. The three new cases include a 5-year-old who attends Solana Beach Presbyterian Preschool, an 11-year-old student of Skyline Elementary in the Solana School District and a 14-year-old student of Earl Warren Junior High in the San Dieguito Union High School District. All three children had been vaccinated.

The San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) is working closely with education officials at all three schools and notification letters have been sent to the parents of all students who may have come into contact with the three children.

"It is not unexpected to see whooping cough in our community. It is a highly contagious disease," said Dean Sidelinger, M.D., M.S.Ed., County Deputy Public Health Officer. "Parents need to make sure their children are immunized to protect against vaccine-preventable diseases.

"While no vaccine provides 100 percent protection against infections, a person who does get the disease after being vaccinated often has less severe symptoms," Sidelinger added.

Named for the "whoop" sound children and adults sometimes make when they try to breathe in during or after a severe coughing spell, whooping cough usually starts with flu-like symptoms, such as runny nose, sneezing, fever and a mild cough. These symptoms may be mild and brief, or last up to two weeks, but are then often followed by severe coughing fits that may be associated with vomiting. Fever, if present, is usually mild. It is treatable with antibiotics.

Whooping cough can occur at any age, but infants and young children are at highest risk of life-threatening complications, the most common of which is pneumonia. In adolescents and adults, rib fractures and difficulty sleeping may occur. Anyone who is not immunized is at a higher risk for severe whooping cough.

It is recommended that children get five doses of DTaP vaccine, one dose at 2 mo., 4 mo., 6 mo., 15-18 mo., and 4-6 years of age. It is also recommended that people 11- 64 years of age receive a one-time dose of Tdap, given in place of a "tetanus booster," which is administered every 10 years.

In 2008, there were 51 cases of whooping cough reported in the county. There have been 30 cases to date this year, including these cases. For more information about whooping cough, please call the HHSA Immunization Branch at (619) 692-8661, or visit the web site at www.sdiz.org.

###

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
1700 PACIFIC HIGHWAY, ROOM 203 • SAN DIEGO, CA 92101-2472