



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

July 10, 2009

**CONTACT:** Tom Christensen (619) 515-6535

**CAJON VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT CONTACT:** Wendy Vaughn-Platt (619) 415-1665

## **EAST COUNTY CHILD DIAGNOSED WITH WHOOPING COUGH** *Increased Number of Cases Seen this Year*

A 7-year-old child who attended an extended day program in the Cajon Valley School District has been diagnosed with pertussis, commonly known as whooping cough. This is the 59<sup>th</sup> case of whooping cough in San Diego County this year. In 2008, there were 51 cases of whooping cough reported in the county and in 2007 the total was 50.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention approximately 5000-7000 cases of whooping cough are reported each year, and the total has been increasing steadily since the 1980s.

"Whooping cough is a highly contagious disease and we want parents and physicians to be aware that it is very active in our community this year," said Wilma Wooten, M.D., M.P.H., San Diego County Public Health Officer. "It's important for people 11 years of age and older to get their Tdap booster shot to help decrease the spread of the disease."

The San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency is working closely with Cajon Valley School District officials to notify the parents of all children who may have come into contact with the ill child.

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 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.

For more information about whooping cough, please call the HHS Immunization Branch at (619) 692-8661, or visit the web site at [www.sdiz.org](http://www.sdiz.org).

###