



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION  
Aug. 26, 2008

**CONTACT:** Jose Alvarez (619) 515-6635

## **WHOOPING COUGH CASE REPORTED TO COUNTY** *Vaccines Urged for Children and Adults*

The County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) has confirmed that a 14-year-old student at Poway High School has whooping cough (pertussis), a highly contagious disease that causes severe coughing. The student had not been immunized against the disease.

“It’s extremely important for parents to ensure that they and their children are protected against vaccine preventable diseases including whooping cough,” said Wilma Wooten, M.D., County Public Health Officer. “Whooping cough can lead to complications in infants. Teenagers and adults should have the Tdap booster, which can prevent whooping cough, diphtheria and tetanus, as immunity to whooping cough can diminish over time.”

Poway High School is working closely with HHSA and has notified parents through letters and e-mails about the possibility of exposure to whooping cough.

Named for the "whoop" sound victims may make 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. Symptoms can last up to two weeks and may be followed by severe coughing fits and vomiting. Whooping cough can occur at any age, but infants and young children are at highest risk of life threatening complications, such as pneumonia, brain damage, and death. Individuals with symptoms of whooping cough should call their health care provider.

The incubation period is commonly 7–10 days, with a range of 4–21 days. 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 single dose of Tdap, given in place of a “tetanus booster” (Td).

In 2007, there were 50 cases of whooping cough reported in the county. There have been 29 cases of whooping cough in San Diego County to date this year, including this case. 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](http://www.sdiz.org).

###