



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 9, 2009

Contact: José A. Álvarez (619) 515-6635

Roosevelt School Contact: Dr. Sandy Gecewicz (760) 726-2170 ext. 2214

Torrey Pines School Contact: Bruce Cochran (760) 753-6491 ext. 5619

TWO STUDENTS DIAGNOSED WITH WHOOPING COUGH

A 12 year-old student at Roosevelt Middle School in Vista and a 16 year-old student at Torrey Pines High School in Del Mar have been diagnosed with pertussis or whooping cough, the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) is reporting today. The 12 year-old student had received the initial five vaccine doses but was due for a booster shot. The 16 year-old was up-to-date on immunizations.

HHSA officials are encouraging parents to immunize their children against all vaccine-preventable diseases, including whooping cough.

"It's important for all family members to stay up-to-date with pertussis vaccines. This includes adults who may need a pertussis booster," said Wilma Wooten, M.D., M.P.H., County Public Health Officer.

HHSA is working closely with school staff to notify the parents of all students who attend the schools.

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.

There have been 116 cases of whooping cough in San Diego County this year. In 2008, there were 51.

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.

###