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Kansas to be Recognized for Improvement in Immunization Coverage Rates

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Kansas' childhood immunization rates have been increasing and those improvements have earned the state the recognition of having the second highest increase in immunization rates for the 4:3:1:3:3:1 series over a three-year period of time. Kansas will receive an award for its achievement in late March at the 2009 National Immunization Conference. [A](#) | [A](#) | [A](#)

“By receiving the right immunizations at the right time, Kansas kids are going to have a healthier start in life,” said Governor Kathleen Sebelius. “Immunizations are part of our larger effort to promote preventative care in Kansas. Not only does it improve the health of our citizens, but it keeps costs down for everyone.”

“Each year that we see an increase in immunization rates is a positive step, but to sustain those increases over time and show a positive trend for Kansas is even more significant,” said KDHE Secretary Roderick L. Bremby. “We have made great progress as a state, but it’s important to recognize that we still have a system to improve and we will continue working with our partners to ensure that Kansas children are immunized on time.” □

Kansas will receive the award for showing the second most improvement based on immunization rates from 2004 through 2007. Over that time period, the state has seen an 11.3 percent increase in coverage in the 4:3:1:3:3:1 series to its current 76.0 percent coverage rate. Nationally, the average increase was 1.2 percent. Texas will be recognized as the most improved state with a 13.5 percent increase in the series. The rates are compiled by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) through the annual National Immunization Survey (NIS) which provides state-level estimates of immunization coverage among 19 to 35-month-old children.

Starting in 2005 the 4:3:1:3:3:1 series became the standard measure for national Healthy People 2010 reporting. The series consists of four doses of DTaP vaccine, three doses of polio vaccine, one dose of measles-mumps-rubella vaccine, three doses of haemophilus influenzae type b vaccine, three doses of hepatitis B vaccine, and one

dose of varicella vaccine.

“Since 2003, KDHE has collaborated with its partners to make changes to the Kansas immunization system, including incorporating recommendations established by the Governor’s Blue Ribbon Task Force. Those changes have had a positive impact on our state’s immunization rates,” Bremby said. “Currently we are involved in Immunize Kansas Kids, a collaborative effort with the Kansas Health Institute. Our hope is that as we begin to implement the findings from that effort we will continue to see success and make even more progress in our immunization coverage rates.”

The following actions have been implemented since 2003 to increase the state’s immunization rates:

Implemented a statewide immunization registry (a centralized database of immunization records) to ensure parents and health care providers know a child’s immunization schedule so that he or she can be fully immunized. The registry now contains records for more than 1.3 million Kansans documenting more than nine million immunizations. Local health departments in 80 of the 105 counties in Kansas and 125 private providers have access to the registry. This is one of the largest health information exchange networks in the state.

Recommended an accelerated immunization schedule for DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis) vaccine to ensure more children complete the series by allowing them to receive the fourth DTaP dose at 12 months, rather than 15-18 months.

Required hepatitis B and varicella (chickenpox) vaccine for school entry starting in 2004.

Expanded the Immunize and Win a Prize program statewide, to provide an incentive for parents to ensure their child is fully immunized, and to assist those families struggling with financial issues surrounding immunizations.

Partnered with the Kansas WIC program regarding immunization status of children in the program.

Partnered with Kansas Health Institute and Kansas Health Foundation to implement the Immunize Kansas Kids project, which produced research to examine barriers to childhood immunizations in Kansas.

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