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News Release

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One-Half Million Immunization Records Help “Stop the Spots!”

(Salt Lake City, UT) - Children covered with red spots drew attention to a potential outbreak during today’s “Stop the Spots” event in celebration of National Infant Immunization Week held April 22-28. The week is dedicated to increasing awareness of the need to vaccinate children at an early age to prevent vaccine preventable diseases. The event also celebrated one-half million immunization records in the voluntary Utah Statewide Immunization Information System (USIIS).

First Lady Jacalyn S. Leavitt, Chair of the Every Child By Two Immunization Task Force, announced the achievement of the 500,000th child’s immunization record in USIIS (ages 0-18). Ogden’s twenty-two-month old Eriq Oge’s most recent immunization was entered into USIIS and it became the 500,000th record in the system. Mrs. Leavitt presented the family with a certificate for a computer donated from Gateway to celebrate this important milestone. The family’s physician who entered the record, Leon White, M.D., from Roy was also recognized for taking part in USIIS.

“Last summer and after much hard work, Utah received fantastic news that it had improved from 49th to 22nd in the nation for immunization rates,” said Mrs. Leavitt. “We must continue our efforts to ensure our goal of having every child immunized by the age of two.” Each year, about 46,000 children are born in Utah, which means approximately 700,000 vaccines should be given in the children’s first two years.

USIIS provides a resource to enable public and private health care providers to increase the immunization rates for children less than 2 years of age in Utah by entering information into the registry. After

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years of planning, the majority of the records were entered in 1998. “The Utah Department of Health (UDOH) and the immunization community hoped to have a minimum of 300,000 total records in the database by April 2001. However, that goal was exceeded to the half million mark sooner than expected,” says Nancy Pare, UDOH USIIS Program Manager. Currently 55 percent of the records (ages 0-5) are entered in the system. The goal is to have 95 percent of this population recorded in the database by July 2002.

Several counties throughout the state will hold activities during National Infant Immunization Week to emphasize that many children lack proper immunizations necessary to combat disease, like chickenpox and measles. Counties and local immunization coalitions throughout Utah are staging “Stop the Spots” events in childcare settings, Women, Infant and Children (WIC) clinics, community health centers, schools and health departments. Activities will range from free gift packs for kids who are immunized to special immunization clinics and hours as well as free food coupons and special presentations. Parents should check with their local health dept, WIC clinic or Community Health Center to learn more about these activities.

Children need 80 percent of their immunizations in the first two years of life to protect them against disease, disability and even death. Although nationally, vaccination levels are at record highs and diseases are at an all time low, approximately 20 percent of the two-year-old children in Utah are inadequately immunized. Infant immunization is a simple and inexpensive way to protect children from twelve infectious diseases.

For more information on immunization, call the Utah Immunization Hotline at 1-800-275-0659. For information on “Stop the Spots” events, contact the Utah Immunization Program at 801-538-9450 or your local health department.

April is Public Health Month
“Utah’s Public Health is for Everybody, Everyday and Everywhere”

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