



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Connecticut's Childhood Immunization Rating Brings Award from the Federal Government

Citations for 16 Local 'Immunization Champions' as Well

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will recognize Connecticut for achieving the third-highest childhood immunization coverage rate in the nation on Wednesday, April 23.

Officials from the CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases will journey to Hartford to honor state leaders. At the same time, the state will recognize 16 immunization "champions" – doctors, nurses, office managers, and their respective local health department immunization coordinators from across Connecticut who have worked especially hard at raising childhood immunization coverage in their communities and ensuring that children they serve are protected against childhood vaccine preventable diseases.

Presenting the award to the state will be **Dr. Melinda Wharton**, deputy director of the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases. (Biography attached.)

The local organizations accepting citations will include:

- Marina Rizio of Saint Vincent Hospital in Bridgeport
- East Hartford Pediatrics
- The Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center
- Paige Woodruff of the Community Health Center in New London
- Debbie Ward of the Community Health Center in Meriden
- Pediatric and Adolescent Healthcare of Ansonia
- Mansfield Pediatrics
- The Community Health Center of New Britain



- The Hospital of Saint Raphael in New Haven
- Dr. Joseph Alessandro, Dr. Paul Dalbec, and Dr. Andrea Gutierrez of Brooklyn Family Medicine
- Martine Quick of Willows Pediatric Group in Westport
- Elaine Braccia of the Stamford Health Department
- Dr. Karen Dettmer, Dr. Sophia Grant, and Dr. Richard Tenczar of Litchfield County Pediatrics
- The Franklin Medical Health Center of Waterbury
- Milford Pediatrics
- The Pediatric Health Center of Danbury

The awards ceremony will begin at 10 a.m. in Room 2-E of the Legislative Office Building in Hartford. A continental breakfast for the honorees will be held at 9:30 a.m. in the LOB's second-floor atrium. Arrangements can be made for one-on-one interviews during the breakfast.

According to results from the CDC 2006 National Immunization Survey, Connecticut achieved an 82 percent coverage rate for the basic immunization series among children 19 to 35 months of age. Connecticut's immunization rate was third only to Massachusetts and North Carolina, and well above the national average of 77 percent. Connecticut has been among the top five states for childhood immunization coverage levels for the past 10 years.

Connecticut's continued success as a national leader in childhood immunization is due in large part to the efforts of many professional, community-based, and private organizations that have worked diligently with the Department of Public Health to raise awareness of the issue. They include the Connecticut chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Connecticut Association of Directors of Health, the state Department of Social Services, and the Connecticut Commission on Children.

The award coincides with National Infant Immunization Week, running from April 19 to April 26. For more on that, visit the CDC website at:

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niw/default.htm.