Nation's Childhood Immunization Rates Remain at or above record levels;

New estimates show adolescent rates below nation's 2010 goals

The nation's childhood immunization rates remain at or near record levels for routinely recommended vaccines, according to 2006 estimates released today by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This continues the trend of more children being protected against vaccine-preventable diseases each year.

According to the CDC's annual National Immunization Survey (NIS), the percentage of U.S. children 19 to 35 months of age who have received the recommended series of childhood vaccines was 77 percent in 2006, statistically similar to the 76.1 percent in 2005.

The recommended series consists of four doses of diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis vaccine, three doses of polio vaccine, one or more doses of measles, mumps and rubella vaccine, three doses of *Haemophilus influenzae* type b vaccine (Hib), three doses of hepatitis B vaccine) and one or more doses of varicella or chickenpox vaccine. This set of immunizations begins shortly after a child is born and continues up to two years of age.

"This is extremely good news," said Dr. Melinda Wharton, deputy director of CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases. "We are continuing to protect more young children and adolescents than ever before from vaccine-preventable diseases that can cause serious illness or death, and for which we often have no effective medical treatments.''

The 2006, NIS documented actual increases in the percentage of 19- to-35 month-old children who had received recommended vaccinations for pneumococcal conjugate vaccine, varicella (chicken pox) vaccine and polio vaccine compared to 2005. The percentage of children receiving pneumococcal conjugate vaccine increased from 82.8 percent to 87 percent for three doses of pneumococcal conjugate vaccine and from 53.7 percent to 68.4 percent for four doses of pneumococcal conjugate vaccine. Varicella vaccine coverage increased from 87.9 percent in 2005 to 89.3 percent in 2006, and poliovirus vaccine coverage increased from 91.7 percent to 92.9 percent during the same time period.

As in previous years, there were substantial state and local differences in the percentages of children who received recommended vaccinations as well as in the percentage who had received all of the recommended vaccine series. Estimates of the percentage of children who had received all their vaccinations ranged from 83.6 percent in Massachusetts to 59.5 percent in Nevada. Among local areas, series coverage ranged from 81.4 percent in Boston, Massachusetts to 65.2 percent in Detroit, Michigan.

The NIS data also suggested that there continue to be small racial/ethnic differences in the percentage of 19- to-35-month-old children receiving the recommended vaccination series. Children who live below the poverty level are less likely to be vaccinated than children who live at or above the poverty level. Because a substantial percentage of black children lived below the poverty level, coverage for black children overall was low compared with white children. Therefore, even though the 2006 survey found that black, non-Hispanic children had lower

vaccination rates than white, non-Hispanic children for the series of routine vaccines, at the difference was likely related to socioeconomic status and household income rather than race.

Adolescent Vaccination below Nation's 2010 Goals

This year, for the first time, the National Immunization Survey included estimates of the percentage of 13- to-17-year-old children who had received recommended immunizations for measles-mumps and rubella vaccine, hepatitis B vaccine, varicella vaccine, tetanus-diphtheria or tetanus, reduced diphtheria and acellular pertussis and meningococcal conjugate vaccine. The tetanus, reduced diphtheria and acellular pertussis and meningococcal conjugate vaccine vaccines, which are specifically targeted for use in adolescents, were licensed and recommended in the U.S. in 2005.

The percentage of adolescents who had received recommended vaccines varied widely by both vaccine and age, with the nation's *Healthy People 2010* goals for adolescents ages 13-15 years not being met for any of the vaccines. The Health People 2010 goals are for 90 percent coverage for adolescents 13 to 15 years of age with three doses of Hepatitis B vaccine, two doses of measles, mumps and rubella vaccine, one dose of either tetanus-diphtheria or tetanus, diphtheria and acellular pertussis vaccine, and one dose of varicella vaccine for those who have not previously had chickenpox.

Among children 13-to-15 years old, 88.5 percent had received two or more doses of measles, mumps and rubella vaccine vaccine. For hepatitis B, 84.3 percent of adolescents had received three or more doses of hepatitis B vaccine, with that percentage rising to 88.6 percent for 13 year olds.

The lowest estimates were associated with the most recently recommended vaccines. About 60 percent of 13-to-17 year olds received a tetanus-diphtheria or tetanus, reduced diphtheria and acellular pertussis vaccination since age 10, but only 10.8 for tetanus, reduced diphtheria and acellular pertussis alone, and 11.7 percent had received a meningococcal conjugate vaccine vaccination.

"The new survey information shows we have more work to do to protect older children from vaccine-preventable diseases," said Wharton. "We need to continue to build awareness of these recommendations among parents and health care providers, and we need to continue our efforts to educate everyone about the health benefits of these vaccines.''

Wharton encouraged parents of all 11- and 12-year-olds to have their child get a routine checkup as a way to ensure the children receive recommended vaccinations.

For more information, visit http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/default.htm.

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