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New Mexico Vaccination Coverage Among Teens Better Than National Average

(Santa Fe) - This week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that of teens in New Mexico, 63.5 percent have received tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis (Tdap), 51.2 percent have received meningococcal, and 53 percent have received human papilloma virus (HPV) vaccines. Nationally, the rates for this same age group are: 55.6 percent, 53.6 percent, and 44.3 percent.

“Immunizations are the best tool we have to keep our young people safe from preventable and serious diseases,” said Department of Health Cabinet Secretary, Dr. Catherine Torres. “While the CDC data is encouraging, I urge all parents to make sure they are keeping their child’s immunizations up-to-date.”

Since 2008, the rate of coverage for at least one dose of Tdap increased in New Mexico by 13 percentage points, similar to the increase seen in the U.S. For meningococcal vaccine, the New Mexico coverage increased by 11.6 percentage points, which is above the increase of 9 percentage points for the U.S. Coverage for at least one dose of HPV vaccine increased by 4.7 percentage points in this state, which is about the same as the increase seen nationally.

Tdap is important to protect against pertussis or whooping cough, a disease that is particularly dangerous for infants. Last year in New Mexico, there were 104 confirmed cases of pertussis reported to the Department of Health. Tdap coverage is required for school entry for children in grades 7 through 12 in New Mexico.

Meningococcal disease is a serious bacterial illness that causes meningitis and blood infections. College students living in dorms are at increased risk of meningococcal disease, so it is best to protect adolescents before they head off to college. Meningococcal vaccine is recommended for all children at 11-12 years of age with a booster dose given between 16 and 18 years of age.

Three doses of HPV vaccine are needed to be fully protected. It is recommended to be given to girls 11 or 12 years of age. This vaccine is most effective if it is given before the first sexual contact—before being exposed to the virus.

HPV vaccine protects against certain strains of human papilloma virus that can cause genital warts as well as cervical cancer. Cervical cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths



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among women around the world. In New Mexico, about 25 women die each year from cervical cancer.

The National Immunization Survey on teen vaccine immunization coverage rates (also called NIS-Teen) provides a “report card” to let us know how well we are doing in protecting our nation’s teens against vaccine-preventable diseases. The NIS-Teen is a random telephone survey of more than 19,000 parents of teens 13-17 years old. It is followed by verification of records with healthcare providers. It provides immunization coverage estimates for three vaccines recommended at 11 or 12 years of age: Tdap, MCV4 and HPV vaccines.

The New Mexico Department of Health provides free immunizations at public health clinics in every county for children whose parents are not insured. To find a public health clinic in your area go online to www.nmhealth.org.

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