PRESS RELEASE

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Vaccines are necessary to protect all school kids

GARFIELD COUNTY, CO – Garfield County Public Health joins other health departments, physicians, schools, parents and partner organizations across the state to call on parents and guardians to keep vaccine-preventable diseases out of Colorado, by making sure school-aged youth are up to date on vaccinations.

“All kids need and deserve protection,” said Garfield County Public Health Director Yvonne Long. “There are schools in Garfield County that are at risk of an outbreak because vaccination rates are too low. We need a high number of vaccinated children in order to protect those that can’t be vaccinated because they aren’t old enough, or have medical issues that prevent them from being vaccinated.”

Colorado ranks last among the 49 states that reported kindergarten vaccination rates. There were 9,424 Colorado kids hospitalized or seen in an emergency room due to vaccine-preventable diseases in 2017.

“The good news is that most people vaccinate their children,” said Long. “A small number claim personal exemptions and choose not to vaccinate. However, there is another group out there that have some, but not all of their required vaccinations. They have simply fallen behind on their records. We want to encourage parents to make a call to their doctor or to the health department to make sure that their children are up to date.”

In Colorado, 23,228 K-12 students entered school without protection from one or more vaccines in 2017. Lower than required vaccination rates place children at risk of preventable outbreaks, such as the cases of measles that have occurred in other states.
Colorado has tools to help parents and guardians make informed choices about vaccinating their children.

- SpreadTheVaxFacts.com guides people through information and misinformation about vaccines, and provides advice from Colorado doctors, who also are parents.
- COVax4Kids.org helps people find out if their kids are eligible for low- or no-cost vaccines, and helps them find a provider.
- COVaxRecords.org lets people know how to request vaccination records for their children.

“Vaccines are safe, and they work,” added Long. “Immunization is about community. The decision to vaccinate is a decision to safeguard our children.”

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Media contact:
Renelle Lott
Chief Communications Officer
Garfield County
108 8th Street, Glenwood Springs, CO 81601
970.945.1377, ext. 1453
970.366.2275 cell
rlott@garfield-county.com
www.garfield-county.com