



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
December 1, 2014

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HEALTH
DEPARTMENT
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Whooping Cough: Adults without Tdap vaccine are a threat to vulnerable infants and children

NORTHWEST MICHIGAN – Following the recent outbreak at a school in Grand Traverse County, pertussis – commonly known as whooping cough – is likely to start popping up in other Northern Michigan communities, according to local health officials. The Health Department of Northwest Michigan is currently investigating possible cases of pertussis in Antrim and Otsego Counties.

With so much attention focused on vaccination for infants and children, it's important for adults to remember that they must also be immunized against pertussis with the Tdap vaccine, according to Joshua Meyerson, M.D., Medical Director for the Health Department. Tdap provides immunization against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis.

“It's essential for all adults to have their Tdap vaccinations, and especially for those who may come into contact with infants and children,” Meyerson said. “If you've never had the Tdap vaccine, or if you're unsure, now is the time to contact your physician or the Health Department to get protected. It could save the life of a child or any other vulnerable person who is exposed to you.” Adults can receive their Tdap vaccination when they get their annual flu vaccine, which is still available through the Health Department for the 2014-15 season. Call **(800) 432-4121** for an appointment.

According to the Michigan Department of Community Health, infants are at highest risk of severe cases of pertussis that may lead to death, and the source of their illness is often older siblings and adults. Infants and children should receive the pertussis vaccination series (DTaP) in accordance with the U.S. childhood immunization schedule. Visit www.nwhealth.org for more information, or call the Health Department at **(800) 432-4121**.

The Health Department of Northwest Michigan is mandated by the Michigan Public Health Code to promote wellness, prevent disease, provide quality healthcare, address health problems of vulnerable populations, and protect the environment for the residents and visitors of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego Counties.