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## (Neb.)-Panhandle Immunization Coalition Advises Parents To Vaccinate Children

By: Roxie Graham-Marski Posted at: 04/25/2013 09:49 AM



(SCOTTSBLUFF)-Last year more than 41,000 cases of whooping cough and 18 related deaths were reported across the United States.

Officials at Regional West Health Services say this preventable disease starts out like a common cold, but symptoms worsen, causing violent and rapid coughing until all the air is gone from the lungs. That's when patients are forced to inhale with a loud "whooping" sound. In infants, the cough can be minimal or not even there. They may instead experience pauses in breathing, known as apnea.

Registered nurse Paulette Schnell says fortunately babies can be protected from whooping cough and other life-threatening disease through infant immunization.

This week is National Infant Immunization Week. Schnell and members of the Panhandle Immunization Coalition are marking the occasion by advising parents of the importance of getting infants immunized and keeping childhood immunizations up to date.

"Giving babies the recommended immunizations by age two is the best way to protect them from 14 serious childhood diseases, including whooping cough and measles," said Schnell. "Vaccine-preventable diseases still circulate in the United States and around the world, so continued vaccination is necessary to protect everyone from potential outbreaks."

Immunization is extremely safe. Vaccines are thoroughly tested before being approved for public use and monitored carefully by doctors, researchers and public health officials. Reported links between autism and childhood vaccinations have been disproved. The single, small British study the reports were based on was not conducted scientifically.

Schnell tells parents that their families will also benefit financially by keeping childhood immunizations up-to-date. "By preventing disease, vaccines also reduce the costs associated with missed time from work, doctor visits, and hospitalizations," she said.

Regional West Community Health offers immunizations for newborns through 18-year-olds at regular Immunization clinics. The clinics are held on the first and third Wednesdays of the month from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m. and on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Call 308-630-1126 for an appointment. No

child will be turned away due to inability to pay. Vaccinations are also available from local health care providers.

--Regional West Health Services