



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH
LANSING

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GOVERNOR

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DIRECTOR

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To: Michigan Hospital CEO

Pertussis (whooping cough) can be a life-threatening infection in infants, and unfortunately, Michigan has seen a significant rise in pertussis cases in recent years. This increase was first observed in Michigan during the second half of 2008 and continued throughout 2009 (902 cases) and 2010 (1,564 cases). As a Hospital CEO, you have significant influence on the impact pertussis will have on infants and their families, medical staff, and your overall institution.

The Michigan Department of Community Health urges you to make sure your employees without medical contraindications are vaccinated against pertussis. Numerous medical organizations, such as the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases, and the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America, to name a few, strongly endorse Tdap vaccination for health care personnel (HCP). Further, the federal Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommends:

- HCP of all ages should receive a single dose of Tdap vaccine as soon as is feasible if they have not previously received it, regardless of the time since the last tetanus-diphtheria (Td) vaccine dose.
- After receiving Tdap, HCP should receive routine booster shots against tetanus and diphtheria as recommended by existing guidelines.
- Hospitals and outpatient clinics should provide Tdap for HCP and take steps to maximize coverage through education, convenient access, and decreasing financial barriers.

Additional reasons to examine your organization's pertussis vaccination policy include:

- Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent pertussis and its complications.
- Secondary attack rates for pertussis are around 70-80% among susceptible household contacts, such as unimmunized or incompletely immunized infants.
- Unvaccinated HCP are at greater risk of acquiring pertussis than the general adult population, and can spread the disease to other HCP and patients.
- Transmission of pertussis in health care facilities can be disruptive and costly. Prevention is cost-beneficial. Despite these facts, in 2008 it was estimated that only 16% of HCP were vaccinated with Tdap.

Prevent the spread of pertussis in your facility by implementing a Tdap vaccination campaign which includes policies for vaccinating your employees and staff, along with standing orders and tracking systems to monitor progress. Protect the families in your care from serious and preventable diseases. Thank you for joining in the fight to prevent pertussis in Michigan.

Sincerely,

Greg Holzman, MD, MPH
Chief Medical Executive