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Bulletin No. 8 March 21, 2005

<http://www.epi.Alaska.gov>

2005 – Year of the Booster / Adult Immunization Campaign

BACKGROUND

In 1925 an outbreak of diphtheria in Nome killed five people and led to a heroic sled dog relay from Nenana to Nome to deliver life-saving diphtheria serum. Fifty years later, in 1975, a diphtheria outbreak in Alaska resulted in 11 cases and 1 death. In response, the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services conducted a massive tetanus/diphtheria (Td) immunization campaign during which over 180,000 people received Td vaccine.

Because a booster dose of Td vaccine is recommended every ten years, reminder campaigns have occurred in Alaska every decade since 1975. The 2005 campaign, the *Year of the Booster*, is designed to focus attention on adult immunizations (including Td), encourage Alaskans to check the status of their immunizations, and support efforts by providers to immunize adults.

TETANUS AND DIPHTHERIA

The overall case-fatality rate for tetanus is approximately 11%, while the diphtheria case-fatality rate ranges from 5-10%.² Vaccine-induced immunity to both diseases decreases with age. Alaska has not had a reported case of tetanus or diphtheria since 1983. This attests to successful immunization programs in schools and childcare facilities, as well as to prior booster campaigns targeting adolescents and adults

All Alaskans who have not had a Td booster in the last 10 years or who have never been immunized against tetanus or diphtheria should get a Td immunization during 2005. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends administration of adult formulation tetanus and diphtheria toxoids beginning at age 11 to 12 and every 10 years thereafter.¹

OTHER ADULT VACCINE BOOSTER RECOMMENDATIONS

During the *Year of the Booster*, providers should consider all immunizations needed by adults to maintain protection from vaccine-preventable diseases.

Pneumococcal Disease

Data from CDC's 2003 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) indicates only 59.6% of Alaskans ≥65 years of age report ever receiving a pneumococcal vaccination.³ **All Alaskans should receive pneumococcal vaccinations beginning at age 55 and booster doses every 6 years thereafter.**⁴

Influenza

The 2003 BRFSS indicates 66.5% of persons ≥65 reporting having received a flu shot within the past year.³ **With adequate vaccine supply, all adults ≥50 years of age should receive a flu vaccination annually.**⁴

To the extent possible with available funding, the Alaska Immunization Program provides adult pneumococcal and influenza vaccine free of charge to enrolled providers.

Td VACCINE AND ADMINISTRATION MATERIALS SUPPLIED AT NO COST TO ALASKA PROVIDERS

Adult Td vaccine is available free of charge to providers enrolled with the Alaska Immunization Program. Currently the vaccine is supplied only in 15-dose vials. To facilitate participation in the *Year of the Booster*, the Program also will supply *VanishPoint*® safety syringes, alcohol wipes, cotton balls, and bandages free of charge with all Td vaccine orders processed in 2005.

During this special effort, providers are asked to consider waiving administration fees, though it is recognized this may not be a viable option for many providers.



YEAR OF THE BOOSTER PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

All Alaska immunization providers are encouraged to participate in the *Year of the Booster* adult immunization campaign to whatever extent possible and to collaborate with local public health centers and other providers on special *Year of the Booster* events. Health fairs and other community events provide ideal immunization opportunities.

To assist in these efforts, special *Year of the Booster* promotional materials are available at no charge. These items include posters, flyers, stickers, adult immunization record cards (“Green Cards”), and Td-specific wallet cards. The campaign mascot is the *Booster Rooster*. A one-size-fits-all *Booster Rooster* costume is available on loan for use at immunization events. Contact **Doreen Stangel** (269-8000 or 888-430-4321 or immune@health.state.ak.us) to order materials or check out the costume.

REFERENCES

1. [Recommended Adult Immunization Schedule --- United States, October 2004--September 2005](#). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *MMWR* 2004; 53(44):Q1-Q4.
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Epidemiology and Prevention of Vaccine-Preventable Diseases*. Atkinson W, Hamborsky J, Wolfe S, eds. 8th ed. Washington DC: Public Health Foundation, 2004.
3. Division of Adult and Community Health, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Online Prevalence Data, 1995-2003](#).
4. Pneumococcal Vaccine Program Expanded - Routine Booster Added in Alaska. *Epidemiology Bulletin* No. 10, May 6, 1994. http://www.epi.hss.state.ak.us/bulletins/docs/b1994_10.htm.