



# N T I M E

## NEW PARENT-HELD IMMUNIZATION RECORD CARDS ON THEIR WAY

**T**he State Immunization Program recently finished redesigning its parent-held immunization record card. The old supply had been depleting, providing an opportunity to update and redesign. The record cards are part of the state immunization educational packets given to all new mothers in Connecticut's birthing hospitals. They have proven to be an effective tracking tool for parents.

The new booklets are in a colorful brochure format with a space inside the front cover to attach a photograph of the child. Improvements to the vaccine record card include the addition of a place for the physician to write in the date when the next shots are due, and a list of relevant child health phone numbers. The booklet bears the State of Connecticut logo and is co-sponsored by the State Immunization Program and the Commission on Children. The booklets are now available for distribution. Immunization providers interested in obtaining them should call the State Immunization Program. <sup>9</sup>

## FREE IMMUNIZATION SATELLITE COURSES OFFERED THROUGHOUT STATE

**T**he CDC sponsors many public health training programs by live satellite broadcast. Up until now, the State Immunization Program hosted these courses for continuing education credit at one site in the Hartford area. Having only one geographic location to view the broadcast was problematic for those people who live or work outside of Hartford County. With this in mind, it was decided to expand the service by offering the courses in up to 17 different areas of the state. Courses will now be hosted throughout the state by local Immunization Action Plan Coordinators. The Coordinators have selected convenient sites in their respective areas to broadcast the satellite courses, and are customizing their course announcement mailing lists to their local areas. Three free courses have already been offered: Vaccine Safety and Risk Communication, Epidemiology and Prevention of Vaccine-Preventable Diseases, and Adult Immunization: Technical Issues; and there has been a threefold rise in participation. All of the immunization courses are available on videotape for no credit if interested parties are not able to attend the live broadcast. Anyone who wishes to attend one of the courses and receive continuing education credit, or would like to borrow the videotape, should contact their nearest IAP Coordinator. A list of IAP Coordinators can be obtained by calling the State Immunization Program @ (860) 509-7929.

Below is a schedule of the remaining satellite courses being offered for 1998.

### **Sept. 10:** Immunization Update

*This program will provide an update of new vaccines and recommendations. The content will be determined by the activities of the ACIP and FDA in the first half of the year. It is anticipated that a discussion of rotavirus vaccine and changes in the vaccination schedule will be discussed.*

### **Nov. 19:** Preparing for Influenza Pandemic

*contents to be announced*

### **Dec. 3:** Surveillance of Vaccine-Preventable Diseases

*This program will discuss guidelines for vaccine-preventable disease surveillance, case investigation, and outbreak control. New or emerging issues will be highlighted. <sup>9</sup>*

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## REGISTRY UPDATE

**T**he The Connecticut Immunization Registry and Tracking System (CIRTS) has entered another phase of development, a stage that will culminate in the technologic infrastructure being in place to enable statewide expansion. The state has selected a software vendor and is in the process of drawing up a contract with the vendor that will have two parts. The first part will include cost projections, implementation timelines, and hardware needs. The second will be the actual statement of work which details training and technical support services. A December implementation is anticipated with Hartford Health Department being the first to go on-line. IAP Coordinators will be trained by the vendor and play a key role in training health care providers in their respective areas in all aspects of the use of CIRTS.

The Immunization program also received a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, All Kids Count Program in February of 1998 to implement a provider-based training program for all pediatricians statewide in the use of the registry software. To carry out this activity, the State Immunization Program established a contract with the Connecticut Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics in February. The funding will support a project coordinator and two field trainers. The goal of the program is to bring every pediatric and family practice in the state on line with CIRTS within a 12-15 month period. The field trainers will be conducting training sessions designed to instruct pediatricians and their office staff on how to enter and retrieve patient immunization histories from CIRTS and the need to further standardize their medical practices so that the database will serve them and their patients as intended. In addition, the contractor will evaluate the timeliness and accuracy of information reported from pediatric and family practices to CIRTS and conduct a survey to assess their satisfaction with various aspects of the registry.

The Connecticut Chapter of the AAP recently mailed out a provider technology survey to over 1,300 licensed pediatricians and family practitioners in the state to assess their capabilities for reporting immunization events to the state registry. The state is asking the IAP Coordinators to help remind providers in their area to complete and return this survey to Jillian Wood at the AAP office in Hartford as soon as possible. This information is crucial in determining the process for rolling out the system statewide.

Providers participating in CIRTS will benefit in several ways. They will be able to:

- identify children who are behind in their immunizations and automatically generate follow-up reminder notices to parents
- obtain immunization histories on patients who transfer from one practice to another resulting in fewer calls to other providers
- electronically print out immunization histories for daycare, camp and school resulting in less time spent manually filling out forms
- electronically order vaccines, track inventory and report doses administered data
- generate pre-appointment reminders to parents for upcoming scheduled immunizations

- determine immunization coverage levels for kids in their practice
- decrease risk of over immunization
- automatically update revisions in the immunization schedule

## VACCINE UPDATE

**O**n October 23, 1997, ACIP recommended that all children 0-18 years of age be vaccinated against hepatitis B. Prior to this recommendation only certain age cohorts and at-risk children were recommended for HBV vaccination. The ACIP also voted to expand the use of VFC hepatitis B vaccine to cover all VFC-eligible children ages 0-18 years beginning March 1, 1998.

On February 11, 1998, a majority of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) members went on record as being in favor of a recommendation for routine use of rotavirus vaccine among infants at 2, 4, and 6 months of age when a licensed product becomes available. Rotavirus is the major cause of severe diarrhea in children under 5 years of age. The vaccine is 64-100% effective in preventing severe disease. A revised draft ACIP statement will be prepared for the June ACIP meeting and will include recommendations on the use of rotavirus vaccine for all infants.

Effective July 1, 1998, Tetramune™ will no longer be available through the State Immunization Program. Providers will have the option of either switching over to separate DTaP and Hib injections or trying to purchase Tetramune™ directly from the manufacturer. A memo was sent regarding this matter to all users of state supplied vaccine dated May 8, 1998.



*The Puppetmaster entertains children with animation as they learn about immunization during National Immunization Week in East Hartford.*

*A clown has found a friend at the 3rd Annual, Kids Care Fair held at the New London Mall where National Immunization Week was celebrated.*



# NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

## Norwalk

Pam Bates participated in an immunization awareness campaign in Fairfield County. Posters were displayed in local restaurants that included hotline phone numbers to call for information on schedules and free shots. The media partners included WEBE

FM, WCUM AM, KOOL FM, and The CT Post. Pam and her staff contributed by distributing coupons for free desserts and Ronald McDonald Band-Aids to the public clinics. Children immunized during NIIW or were up-to-date with vaccinations received a coupon.

## FEATURE SPOT



## New Britain

### NIIW CARRIES A CALENDAR FULL OF EVENTS IN NEW BRITAIN

If there is a town that knows the importance of childhood immunization, it is New Britain. Creative means were used in many venues during NIIW to deliver the message to parents to make sure their children are immunized. Ramona Anderson put together a calendar of events that was sent to numerous newspapers and included in local radio and television broadcasts. Some of the highlights follow.

Melanie Gedraitis, RN, Sure Shot Coordinator from the VNA of Central CT, Inc. and Ramona were interviewed on Channel 30's, "Celebrate" program where they discussed many issues. They conversed about the History of immunization in New Britain, the Sure Shot program, the IAP program, and an overview of diseases including the benefits of vaccination and highlights of NIIW. Flyers were distributed to 2,500 school children about upcoming immunization related events.

A puppet show by *Puppetranz* was presented for children in the city jointly with the New Britain Public Library and attracted 252 children and their caregivers. Tables with immunization information were set up and were well attended.

An immunization records night was held at the New Britain Baseball Stadium. Adults who brought their child's immunization record with them received a free ticket for that night's Rock Cats game. An information table was set up and visited by approximately 1,800 people. Referrals were made from both the puppet show and baseball game to an immunization clinic held at the Community Health Center which was also advertised in the local newspaper.

## Naugatuck Valley

Kim Blount organized an Immunization Poster Contest in conjunction with National Infant Immunization Week. All Valley schools were asked to participate. Newspaper releases were submitted to all Valley papers to advertise. Various donated items were awarded to the winners during NIIW. All winning posters were on display at their local health fair.

## Torrington

The Torrington Area Health District together with Maria Seymour Brooker Memorial, Inc. and the Torrington Rotary club sponsored the third annual "BE WISE-IMMUNIZE" Children's fair. A copy of the child's immunization record was needed for admission. Entertainment was provided by "Frizzles" the clown, Ronald McDonald, and "Buckle Bear", the seat belt safety bear. Healthy Start provided a moonwalk. There was a petting zoo and pony rides. Local high school students painted children's faces.

## Waterbury

Flyers announcing National Infant Immunization Week and the health department's free immunization clinic for children were sent to local churches. The flyers stressed the importance of immunizations and of reminding others. Romiah Yamin also sent Public Service Announcements to local area radio stations to broadcast every day during NIIW. Finally, bus posters promoting immunization were displayed on approximately 20 buses for one month.

## Danbury

Sue Gran and her staff sponsored a coloring contest to promote NIIW. 4,500 coloring forms were distributed in preschools, Head Start, public and parochial schools in Danbury. The forms were reproductions of the state immunization teddy bear with the logo "Vaccinate, It's my best shot". Along with the forms, flyers and immunization literature were also given to each site. Approximately 900 were returned and age appropriate books were given to the winners

## East Hartford

Carol Walsh of the East Hartford Health Department, Family Resource Center and Headstart, collaborated to promote childhood immunization for NIIW at the Head Start Family Fun Day, in which 81 families attended. Part of the activities included an enchanting puppet show performance using props and participatory song to spread the immunization message. The audience sang about immunization and echoed back "The East Hartford Health Department!!!", when

asked where to get immunized. Carol and her outreach worker, Blanch Silva handed out immunization literature and answered questions at an immunization booth. Children received stickers and coloring sheets. The event proved to be effective at getting the message across in a fun and innovative way. (See photo, p. 2)

**New London**

Debra Frank participated in the 3rd annual Kids Care Fair held at the New London Mall. Well over 300 visitors attended the fair which featured many child health and welfare booths including an immunization booth where free shots were given. (See photo, p. 2)

**τ Ask the Experts τ**

*Editor's note: This information is provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Immunization Program.*

**τ For whom is a hepatitis B surface antibody (anti-HBs) titer recommended after three doses of vaccine are given?**

It is only necessary to know the immune response of persons in the following risk groups:

- health care workers with a known acute exposure to blood and body fluids
- infants born to hepatitis B surface antigen positive mothers
- Immunocompromised persons, e.g., dialysis patients, AIDS patients
- sex partners of HBsAg positive persons

Testing is not recommended after routine vaccination of infants, children, or adolescents

**τ Are the hepatitis B vaccines interchangeable?**

Yes. The vaccines available in the United States are Recombivax-HB (Merck & Co) and Engerix-B (SmithKline Beecham). They may be used interchangeably at the recommended dosage for each product.

**τ If my patient has a positive anti-HBs titer after 2 doses of hepatitis B vaccine, is a 3rd dose necessary?**

Yes, the 3-dose series is based on the results of long-term immunogenicity studies using the 3-dose regimen. These data show the 3-dose series of hepatitis B vaccine provides long-term immunologic memory that gives long-term protection.

**τ If it is discovered that an infant of an HBsAg-positive mother received Recombivax-HB 2.5 mcg instead of the high-risk formulation, what should be done?**

Different actions should be taken depending on when this is discovered. If discovered within 2 weeks after birth: repeat dose 1 with the correct high-risk formulation and continue to give the correct formulation for doses 2 and 3. If discovered within 2 weeks after dose 2: repeat the last dose with the correct dose. If discovered after

dose 3: do not repeat any doses since the period of post-exposure protection has passed. Do postvaccination testing. The objective is to be sure the child has antibody to provide preexposure protection in the future.

**τ Can an accelerated hepatitis B vaccination schedule be followed in infants as it is in adolescents? For example, can one use a 0-1-4-month or 0-2-4-month regimen?**

No. The third dose should not be given prior to 6 months of age as poorer response rates are seen in infants who complete the vaccination series prior to 6 months of age. Dose 2 should be separated from dose 1 by at least 4 weeks and dose 3 should be separated from dose 1 by at least 4 months, but dose 3 should not be given earlier than 6 months of age.

**CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH, IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM MORBIDITY REPORT**

Disease	1/1/98-6/18/98	Total 1997
Measles	0	1
Mumps	0	1
Rubella	28	5
CRS (congenital rubella syndrome)	0	0
Diphtheria	0	0
Tetanus	0	0
Pertussis	14	37
Hib	0	2

**IAP ON TIME**

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410 Capitol Avenue, MS # 11 MUN  
P.O. Box 340308  
Hartford, CT 06134-0308  
Phone: (860) 509-7929

Editor  
Designer

Vincent A. Sacco, MS, Program Supervisor  
Carolann M. Kapur, MPA