



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ledge Light Health District and WIC Team-Up to Prevent Childhood Diseases

Ledge Light Health District and the Women, Infant and Children's Program of TVCCA are teaming up to highlight the importance of protecting children from vaccine-preventable disease. This, in time for National Infant Immunization Week, April 24-May 1, 2021. "This year, in particular, it's critical to ensure that families stay on track for children's routine checkups and recommended vaccinations. Due to the pandemic there has been a drop in children being immunized which is a concern. We don't want to see outbreaks of childhood diseases such as measles, mumps and such on top of COVID-19." said Kris Magnussen, Communicable Disease Prevention Supervisor for Ledge Light Health District.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommend that children stay on track with their well-child appointments and routine vaccinations even during the pandemic. As in-person learning and play become more common, on-time vaccination is even more urgent to help provide immunity against 14 serious diseases, such as polio, measles, diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), rubella (German measles), mumps, tetanus, etc.

Together, the two agencies will work to increase infant immunizations rates across southeast Connecticut and successfully link children at risk (for childhood diseases) to a medical home.

"We want to remind our parents of the following points", said TVCCA WIC Director Regina Brady:

- *Doctors can safely see children, even during the pandemic. Medical offices are taking steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and can make sure children are receiving the vaccines they need to prevent outbreaks of infectious diseases.*
- *Most parents choose the safe, proven protection of vaccines. Giving babies the recommended vaccinations by age two is the best way to protect them.*
- *Vaccines are among the most successful and cost-effective public health tools available for preventing disease and death. Among children born during 1994-2018, vaccination prevented an estimated 419 million illnesses.*
- *Vaccination is a shared responsibility. Families, healthcare professionals, and public health officials must work together to help protect the entire community.*
- *Protecting babies from whooping cough and flu begins before a baby is born. All pregnant women are recommended to receive the whooping cough vaccine (Tdap) and inactivated influenza vaccine (IIV) during each pregnancy. Learn more about vaccines recommended during pregnancy at cdc.gov/vaccines/pregnancy/.*

For more information, to find a pediatrician, or to request a free copy of your or your child's immunization record, contact Cindy Barry, Senior Program Coordinator at 860-448-4883 or cbarry@llhd.org.

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Ledge Light Health District - LLHD - serves as the local health department for East Lyme, Groton, Ledyard, Lyme, New London, North Stonington, Old Lyme, Stonington and Waterford, Connecticut. As a health district, formed under Connecticut General Statutes Section 19a-241, LLHD is a special unit of government, allowing member municipalities to provide comprehensive public health services to residents in a more efficient manner by consolidating the services within one organization.