



Jeb Bush
Governor

M. Rony François, M.D., M.S.P.H., Ph.D.
Secretary, Department of Health

PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Tuesday, April 04, 2006

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:
Jeannine Mallory, Public Information Director
PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
727-824-6908 (for media use only)

A banner for National Infant Immunization Week. It features a yellow background with a blue border. The text reads: "National Infant Immunization Week April 22-29, 2006", "Love them. Protect them. Immunize them.", "Working together with Vaccination Week in the Americas", and "Vaccination: an act of love". On the right side, there is an illustration of a family (a man, a woman, and a child) inside a heart shape.

National Infant Immunization Week April 22-29, 2006

Love them. Protect them. Immunize them.

Working together with Vaccination Week in the Americas

Vaccination: an act of love

Pinellas County Health Department Kicks Off National Infant Immunization Week and Vaccination Week in the Americas

Nearly 1 million children in the United States are not adequately immunized. Immunizations are safe and protect our children, families and community making them one of our most cost-effective public health strategies.

In the first 24 months of life children need more than 80 percent of their vaccinations to protect them from diseases, disabilities, and death. Each year new and improved vaccines and ways to combine them are developed. These innovations will improve safety and efficacy of vaccines.

NIIW is a national effort to educate parents, caregivers, providers and communities about the importance of timely infant immunization. More than 500 organizations and communities in the U.S. – including the **Pinellas County Health Department** – are expected to participate in this year's observance scheduled for April 22-29, 2006. This year NIIW is working together with the Pan American Health Organization's Vaccination Week in the Americas, to promote immunization in all countries of the Americas. More than 35 countries in the Western Hemisphere are joining together to highlight the need for routine vaccinations and to promote access to health services for infants and children during this week.

Interesting information about vaccines:

- Vaccines are among the most successful public health tools available for preventing disease and death. They not only help protect vaccinated individuals from developing potentially serious diseases, they also help protect entire communities by preventing and reducing the spread of infectious agents.

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- We can now protect children from more vaccine-preventable diseases than ever before. Because we can prevent more diseases, parents are often not aware what it takes to fully immunize a child.
- Infants and young children are particularly vulnerable to infectious diseases; that is why it is critical that they are protected through immunization.
- Children who are not immunized increase the chance that others will get a vaccine-preventable disease.
- Immunizations are extremely safe thanks to advancements in medical research and ongoing review by doctors, researchers and public health officials.
- Children are far more likely to be harmed by serious infectious diseases than by immunization.
- Parents and caregivers need to take responsibility for their child's vaccinations. They are encouraged to become informed consumers and keep a record of each immunization visit.
- Immunization protects families and communities. Children who are not immunized increase the chance that others will get the disease.

The Pinellas County Health Department will support NIW/VWA by offering extended hours for immunizations in three of its health center locations for infants, and children needing to meet vaccine requirements for 7th grade. Extended hours are as follows:

- **Tuesday, April 25, 2006 – Largo Health Center: 12420 130th Ave. North,
Extended hours: 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.**
- **Wednesday, April 26 – Pinellas Park Health Center: 6350 76th Ave. North,
Extended hours: 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.**
- **Thursday, April 27 – Clearwater Health Center: 310 North Myrtle Ave.,
Extended hours: 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.**

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The mission of the Pinellas County Health Department is to promote, protect and improve the health and safety of residents and visitors through public and private community efforts.
www.PinellasHealth.com