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To: All Local Media

From: R. Joseph Ebel RS, MS, MBA, Health Commissioner

Contact: Nancy Hanger RN, Director of Nursing

Subject: Time to Check Your Child's Shot Record

Now is a great time for pre-school and school -aged children their vaccines. A new requirement for kindergarten children this year includes a second dose of Varicella vaccine (chickenpox). In addition to this vaccine, a 5th dose of DTap, a 4th dose of Polio, and a 2nd dose of MMR is also required. It is best to have these vaccines completed before you formally register your child for Kindergarten.

Children entering the 7th grade in the fall are required a dose of Tdap vaccine. This vaccine offers protection against Pertussis (whooping cough) as well as Tetanus and Diphtheria. School nurses in various districts across the county and Newark may be sending home requests soon for parents to send in proper documentation showing this vaccine has been given. When you see your medical provider or visit the health department to get this vaccine, you may be informed of several other vaccines a child between the ages of 10 and 19 may receive. These vaccines include a second dose of Chicken pox (Varicella), HPV (Human papillomavirus), Meningitis (Meningococcus), and Hepatitis A and B. These vaccines are highly recommended to control some very serious diseases.

Getting these vaccines while your child is young is very important. Not only does the onset of protection begin earlier, but with some vaccines such as HPV, it is believed the younger the child the better the protection. HPV vaccine offers protection against two types of cervical cancer. Recent information indicates that many mouth, neck, and throat cancers may be caused by the HPV virus. Studies are being done to determine if HPV vaccine may also offer protection with some of these type cancers.

High school Juniors and Seniors planning to attend college this fall may need vaccines as well. Because the age limit for receiving state provided vaccine is age 19, please check your child's college requirements and get the vaccines required as soon as possible. Once your child turns age 19, the vaccines must be privately purchased and the cost goes up significantly.

The Ohio Department of Health currently provides vaccines to the Licking County Health Department for infants through age 18. A small administration/assessment fee is the only requested cost, if able to pay. Medicaid is also accepted. Vaccines will still be provided even if there is an inability to pay.

Vaccine clinics at various times, some walk-in and some by appointment, are available every week day except Friday at the Licking County Health Department. Some vaccines are a two or three dose series, so it's important to get started with this now. For questions regarding vaccines or clinic sites and times call 740-349-6535 or visit www.lickingcohealth.org.