



Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health

MEDIA RELEASE

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Cerro Gordo County Ranks First in Toddler Vaccine Rates

(Mason City) – The Iowa Department of Public Health has released the 2016 Immunizations in Iowa Annual Report, and Cerro Gordo County should be proud!

The report shows that Cerro Gordo County's two year old immunization coverage rates were the **highest in the state** at 87%. This means that 87% of all two year olds in Iowa have received all of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommended immunizations by the age of two.

"High immunization rates are associated with a decrease in vaccine preventable diseases", says Bethany Bjorklund, Immunization Nurse at the Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health. "We continue to improve each year, and we will continue working toward our goal of having 90% of all two year olds fully protected."

Cerro Gordo County also performed well in the adolescent category. Adolescent immunization coverage rates continue to increase every year. In 2016, Cerro Gordo County was at 78%. The new meningococcal vaccine requirement for all 7th and 12th grade students will aide in continue toward the goal of reach 90% of adolescents being up-to-date on their vaccines.

Collaborations between the Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health, Mercy Medical Center North Iowa, private physician offices, licensed childcare centers, and schools are major contributors to the county's success.

The Health Department is a recipient of the Empowerment Grant that funds a program called *Calling the Shots*. This program is an evidenced based immunization reminder service that has helped increase our area immunization rates due to reminders being sent to parents/guardians of young children who are behind on the recommended vaccination schedule. This program has allowed the Health Department to audit eight Mercy Medical Center Clinics in two counties to ensure their patients are receiving the necessary vaccines on time. In 2017-2018, *Calling the Shots* will also be partnering with Hancock County Health System to cover eleven clinics total. This program was also a major contributor to the success of the two-year old immunization coverage rate for Cerro Gordo County.

"Thank you to our area health care providers and parents for not only protecting their own children, but all of those around them, including those who cannot be immunized due to medical reasons," says Bjorklund. "There is still work to do, but we are headed in the right direction!"

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Enc: 2016 Immunizations in Iowa Annual Report (*County map visuals on page 16 & 20 of report*)

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