



**For Release:** April 23, 2013

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### **SCHOOL NURSES ENCOURAGE STUDENT TDAP VACCINATION**

HICKORY, NC – Catawba County Public Health school nurses are encouraging parents to schedule appointments for Tdap vaccination now to avoid the back-to-school rush. Tdap vaccination is required for students entering sixth grade. The Tdap vaccine protects against tetanus and diphtheria as well as pertussis, which is also known as whooping cough.

Parents must submit proof of their child’s vaccination record within 30 days of the first day of school (by Sept. 25, 2013) for their child to remain in school.

“As all fifth graders in Catawba County have this requirement, appointments will be more difficult to get at the beginning of the school year so we’re encouraging parents to call for appointments now,” said Jennifer Lindsay, school health supervisor, Catawba County Public Health. “It’s also important that parents understand the Tdap vaccine will not be offered at school as in the past.”

In recent years, pertussis has been on the rise in North Carolina. In 2012, state public health officials tracked 179 cases of pertussis in just a six month period. In comparison, there were only 126 cases of pertussis reported to the state in all of 2011. Vaccination is the best method of prevention.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, pertussis is a respiratory illness usually spread from person to person by coughing or sneezing while in close contact with others.

Tdap appointments can be scheduled with family doctors or by calling Catawba County Public Health at (828) 695-5800.

The Tdap vaccine is required for:

- All individuals attending public school who are entering the sixth grade on or after August 1, 2008, if five years or more have passed since the last dose of tetanus/diphtheria toxoid.
- All individuals not attending public schools (i.e., private, home-school, non-traditional schools) who are 12 years of age on or after August 1, 2008, if five years or more have passed since the last dose of tetanus/diphtheria toxoid.
- Individuals enrolling in college or university for the first time on or after July 1, 2008, if a tetanus/diphtheria toxoid or tetanus/diphtheria/pertussis vaccine has not been administered within the past 10 years.

Catawba County Public Health offers all required immunizations for children ages 2 months to 18 years as well as vaccines for adults. This includes flu shots and vaccines recommended for international travel.

Located off Fairgrove Church Road behind Catawba Valley Medical Center in Hickory, N.C., Catawba County Public Health provides health and education services to eligible men, women, and children in the community. For more information, please call (828) 695-5800 or visit [www.catawbacountync.gov/phealth](http://www.catawbacountync.gov/phealth).

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