



SCHOOL NURSES WORKING TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH NC LAW

HICKORY, NC – To ensure compliance with the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' recommendations and North Carolina immunization law, Catawba County Public Health school nurses are reminding parents and guardians of rising fifth graders that a booster dose of the Tdap vaccine is required before entering the sixth grade in the 2014-2015 school year.

Tdap is a combination vaccine that provides protection against three diseases: tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (commonly called whooping cough). Pertussis has been on the rise in North Carolina in recent years making it even more important for children to stay up-to-date with vaccines.

The longer parents wait to get this required booster for their children, the harder it is for providers to schedule appointments before the deadline and maintain an appropriate supply of the vaccine. School nurses are diligently working with each school system in order to communicate this message to parents. The first reminder letter for the Tdap vaccine was sent home in December. The second letter went home in January with fifth grade students. Subsequent communication will be sent to parents each month until the end of the school year.

"We are encouraging parents to plan ahead and not wait until the last minute," said Jennifer Lindsay, RN, school health supervisor, Catawba County Public Health. "Plus, it's a great opportunity to schedule children for their well-child checks and take care of both needs at once."

Children must bring proof to their school nurse that they have received the Tdap vaccine from a medical provider. According to the Tdap immunization law, if a child cannot show proof of this vaccination by the thirtieth calendar day of sixth grade, the child can be suspended from school until proof of vaccination is provided.

Children 10 years of age or older are eligible for this vaccine and can contact their health care provider, local pharmacy, or Catawba County Public Health (828-695-5800) to receive the vaccine.

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.

"Leading the Way to a Healthier Community"