



NEWS RELEASE

February 4, 2009

Contact: Althea Milechman, Multnomah County Public Affairs Office
503-988-6805 or 503-969-7239

Multnomah County School Exclusion date for immunizations is February 18, 2009 *Parents receive notices this week*

This week, approximately 8,000 Multnomah County parents will receive letters stating that their children must be immunized or will not be admitted to school on the school exclusion date of February 18, 2009. The number of this year's letters is nearly double the amount sent in 2008 due to the two new vaccines that became required to attend school this year. Previously, the number of exclusion orders issued was declining, from a high of 10,530 in 2004 to 4,280 in 2008, as children and students got caught up on the new vaccine requirements that were introduced in the year 2000.

This is the final notice informing parents of children in public schools, pre-schools, Head Start programs, private schools, and other children's facilities. Approximately 111,000 children in Multnomah County must meet the school exclusion requirements each year and approximately 601 (less than 1%) were excluded from school last year until they received needed vaccines.

An immunization clinic will be held on February 17, the day prior to school exclusion day. Multnomah County Health Department is also sponsoring a series of immunization clinics for children who are uninsured or underinsured throughout February to bring them up to date on their vaccinations and enable them to stay in school.

**Portland State Office Building
800 NE Oregon Street
First Floor
Portland, Oregon 97232
9:00 am to 7:00 pm**

Parents are asked to bring letters they have received from the school or county health department and their children's immunization records to the clinics. Families with health insurance are encouraged to see their regular medical provider.

"More than ever, we depend on immunizations to ensure the health of our community. In addition to protecting the population from vaccine-preventable diseases, immunizations ensure children will not miss school days and make the classroom safe for all by preventing communicable diseases," states Lillian Shirley, Director of Multnomah County Health Department.

-More-

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For more information contact:

- Multnomah County Health Department Information and Referral at 503-988-3816 for information on upcoming immunization clinics
- Multnomah Education Service District at 503-257-1760 for information on public school student vaccination records
- Visit the Oregon Department of Human Services' website at <http://oregon.gov/DHS/ph/imm/school/index.shtml>
- Visit Multnomah County Health Department's website for a list of immunization clinics at www.mchealth.org/immunizations.html

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Note to Assignment Editors: Media Availability and Photo Opportunity

Paul Lewis, M.D., Deputy Tri-County Health Officer, will be available for interviews at the School Exclusion Immunization Clinic:

February 17, 2009

1:30 to 2:30 pm

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800 NE Oregon Street, first floor
Portland, Oregon 97232