



## **NIIW Overview**

National Infant Immunization Week (NIIW) is an annual observance to highlight the importance of protecting infants from vaccine-preventable diseases and celebrate the achievements of immunization programs and their partners in promoting healthy communities. Since 1994, NIIW has served as a call to action for parents, caregivers, and healthcare providers to ensure that infants are fully immunized against 14 vaccine-preventable diseases. This year NIIW will be held April 25-May 2, 2009.

Vaccination plays a critical role in safeguarding public health globally. During NIIW 2009, hundreds of communities across the United States will join those in the Western Hemisphere and Europe to celebrate Vaccination Week in the Americas (VWA) and European Immunization Week. Over sixty countries around the world will participate.

Washington State and Cook, DuPage, and Lake Counties of Illinois will host special NIIW kick off events. Additionally, bi-national events are being planned along the United States - Mexico border in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the US-Mexico Border Health Commission (USMBHC), state and local health departments, and other immunization partners. They will be joined by hundreds of communities from across the United States in celebrating NIIW through community awareness, healthcare provider education, and media events to promote infant immunizations.

### **NIIW provides an opportunity to:**

- Highlight the importance and benefits of childhood immunizations, especially to parents.
- Educate parents and caregivers about the importance of vaccination in protecting their children from birth against vaccine-preventable diseases.
- Focus attention on our immunization achievements and celebrate the accomplishments made possible through successful collaboration.
- Revitalize efforts to protect children against vaccine-preventable diseases and give them a healthy start in life.
- Encourage better communication between parents and healthcare providers.
- Remind parents and caregivers they need to make and keep needed immunization appointments.
- Provide parents and caregivers with a toll-free number, 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636), to locate a facility that offers immunizations (Vaccines for Children's program) for their child.

### **NIIW also supports efforts to:**

- Work with state and local health departments and local coalitions to develop and implement a local communication strategy to increase awareness of the importance of immunization and improve local immunization coverage rates as measured by the National Immunization Survey.

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- Create events that attract community and media to increase the number and visibility of national and local media stories on infant immunization.
- Provide a forum to pitch news stories, provide a media hook to interest local media in developing feature stories on the importance of childhood immunization, and create opportunities for local media interviews with immunization experts.
- Recognize local partners and volunteers for their year-round efforts helping to raise childhood immunization coverage, with special emphasis on completing the vaccination series.
- Create opportunities for local organizations and agencies to work together as coalitions.

Every community, large and small, can take an active roll in the reduction and prevention of vaccine-preventable diseases and celebrate NIIW. Harness the power of your community by bringing together local groups, organizations, businesses, hospitals, day care centers, churches, providers, political leaders and the media to plan local NIIW activities. Below are a few ways in which you and your community can participate in NIIW.

### **Community**

- Plan a NIIW kick-off event with your local partners that include activities such as a news conference or an immunization fair that will encourage the participation of parents and attract media attention.
- Arrange for your mayor or governor to sign a NIIW proclamation.
- Organize an awards/appreciation luncheon or dinner to recognize healthcare providers and community and business leaders who have demonstrated excellence in raising local immunization rates.
- Organize a door-to-door educational campaign or collaborate with an existing community health worker network or other home visit services to raise awareness about the importance of timely immunization.
- Use CDC's professionally produced, English and Spanish-language infant immunization public education campaign locally. Collaborate with local media outlets to air the public service announcements on local radio stations and place the print ads in community newspapers and magazines. To view and download campaign products, please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niiw/>.
- Encourage your organization and your partner agencies to show their support for infant immunization. Disseminate valuable infant immunization information to the public by posting the official NIIW icon on your website and linking to the national NIIW webpage. For details visit the website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niiw/>.

### **Providers**

- Encourage local hospitals to conduct grand rounds focusing on infant and childhood immunization.
- Persuade hospitals and healthcare organizations to promote immunization in prenatal classes and during prenatal visits.

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- Provide after-hours and weekend immunization services to reduce wait times and eliminate access barriers.
- Implement an immunization reminder system.
- Create and maintain a patient-friendly environment and provide culturally appropriate immunization education materials.

### **Parents and Caregivers**

- Keep an immunization record and update it after every doctor visit.
- Ask your doctor whether your child is up-to-date on her immunizations.
- Write an article or editorial for the local newspaper. Visit <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niiw/> for sample articles.
- Work with local health departments, clinics, and hospitals to promote neighborhood clinics.
- Distribute immunization material to social service agencies and other community agencies that serve children, such as foster homes, refugee centers, homeless shelters, day care programs, schools, churches, libraries, and hospitals. Encourage agencies to share this information with parents of children 24 months and younger through website postings, newsletters and bulletin boards.

***Please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niiw/> for additional resources on planning an NIIW event and to download English and Spanish-language NIIW campaign materials including print ads, radio PSAs, sample op-ed articles, and other public relations and planning tools.***

This document can be found on the CDC website at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niiw/2008/downloads/NIIWOverview-508.doc>