

WEST VIRGINIA
Department of



For more information contact:
Sarah Lieu
Public Information Specialist
Division of Immunization Services
Telephone: (304) 356-4099
Sarah.M.Lieu@wv.gov

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CDC Presents Top Honors to West Virginia Immunization Program
More teens and adults benefiting from several potentially life-saving vaccines

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources Division of Immunization Services received two national honors from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for its efforts to control vaccine-preventable diseases among children, adolescents and adults in the State.

“Immunizations not only protect the vaccinated person from vaccine-preventable diseases, but also lower the chances of passing diseases to those with weakened immune systems, infants and others, thereby contributing to a healthier West Virginia,” said Dr. Letitia Tierney, Commissioner of the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health and State Health Officer.

The CDC ranked West Virginia among the top three states in the country for having the highest number of adults immunized against the flu. Approximately 52.3% of adults in West Virginia got a flu shot in the 2013-2014 season, compared to 42.2% nationally.

“Fortunately, flu vaccines have become available in more venues in recent years, including pharmacies and grocery stores, which has contributed to the efforts of doctors’ offices and health departments,” said Jeff Neccuzi, Director of the West Virginia Division of Immunization Services. The West Virginia Division of Immunization Services also was recognized for being among the top five states for most improved immunization coverage of adolescents, ages 13-17. The number of adolescents in West Virginia immunized against several vaccine-preventable diseases has continued a steady rise in recent years to nearly 80% for Tdap and meningitis vaccines.

Neccuzi attributes the increase to the 7th and 12th grade immunization requirements that took effect in the 2012-2013 school year. Students entering those grades must now be vaccinated against several diseases, including tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), and meningitis. “It’s a testament to the dedication of our school nurses, and immunization providers that we have achieved over 99% compliance with these requirements in every county of West Virginia,” Neccuzi said.

The CDC announced the awards at the annual National Immunization Conference this week in Atlanta.

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