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PRESS RELEASE

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National Infant Immunization Week ***Immunization-The Power To Protect***

(SANTA BARBARA, Calif.) -- The Santa Barbara County Public Health Department is joining the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) in recognizing April 24 – May 1, 2021 as National Infant Immunization Week (NIIW). The focus is on the importance of protecting children two years and younger from vaccine-preventable diseases (VPDs). As in-person learning and play become more common, on-time vaccination is even more urgent to help provide immunity against 14 serious diseases.

COVID-19 has caused many disruptions in families' lives including missed vaccinations. CDC recommends families check with their healthcare providers to make sure children stay on track with their well-child appointments and are up to date on routinely recommended vaccines, even during the pandemic. In May 2020 CDC found a troubling drop in routine childhood vaccinations as a result of families staying at home. While families followed public health warnings about going out, an unfortunate result was many missed recommended vaccinations.

Vaccination is a shared responsibility. Families, healthcare professionals, and public health officials must work together to help protect the entire community. Medical offices are taking steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and can make sure children are receiving the vaccines they need to prevent outbreaks of infectious diseases. Immunization saves millions of lives every year and is widely recognized as one of the world's most successful and cost-effective health interventions.

The CDC's recommended immunization schedule for infants and children protects them from 14 vaccine-preventable diseases and is designed to provide protection early in life, before they are exposed to potentially life-threatening diseases. The Santa Barbara County Public Health Care Centers can offer the vaccines infants and children require to stay healthy. Find a Health Care Center near you at <http://www.countyofsb.org/phd/>