Tobacco Prevention Settlement Program:
New Tobacco Control Policies

County Law Prohibits New Stores from Selling Tobacco Products Near Schools:
The Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors, led by 1st District Supervisor Carbajal, recently voted unanimously to amend their existing tobacco retailer licensing ordinance. Fees were increased, along with sanctions and penalties for selling tobacco products to youth under 18 years of age. New businesses may not sell tobacco within 1,000 feet of a K-12 school. Distance from schools and sales rates vary by community and data are available for all cities in the county. The changes to local law go into effect December 9, 2011, and hold the business owners, not just the clerks behind the counters, accountable for selling to teens.

Carpinteria City Planning to Limit Smoking in Most Outdoor Areas:
The Carpinteria City Council voted 5-0 to have staff draft a comprehensive outdoor second-hand smoke ordinance for their consideration in early January, 2011. They heard testimony that was overwhelmingly supportive at a recent public hearing on the matter. Data played a key role in informing their policy decision. Youth from local agencies collected 839 public opinion surveys at a variety of community locations in the past six months. For more information on the data or ordinances, please contact Dawn M. Dunn, MPH, Administrator, Tobacco Prevention Settlement Program at Santa Barbara County Public Health Department - dawn.dunn@sbcphd.org

Immunization Program: Influenza Vaccine 2010

Supply is plentiful for this season’s flu vaccine which contains A/California/7/2009 (H1N1)-like A/Perth/16/2009 (H3N2)-like and B/Brisbane/60/2008-like antigens. The ACIP (Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices) has expanded its recommendation to include vaccination of everyone age 6 months and older. Persons vaccinated with the 2009 H1N1 Flu Vaccine should still be vaccinated with this year’s 2010-11 trivalent seasonal vaccine even if they received the 2009 H1N1 Flu Vaccine later in the previous season.

National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW), December 5-11, 2010, is intended to raise awareness of the importance of vaccination and encourage vaccination through December and beyond. In more than 80% of influenza seasons since 1976, peak influenza activity did not occur until January or later and in more than 60% of the seasons, the peak was in February or later. Providers should offer vaccination during routine health-care visits or during hospitalizations and vaccination efforts should continue throughout the season.

A newly approved inactivated trivalent vaccine (Fluzone High-Dose [sanofi pasteur]) contains 60 mcg of hemagglutinin antigen per influenza vaccine virus strain is an alternative inactivated vaccine for persons age 65 years and older. Persons age 65 years and older can also be administered any of the standard-dose inactivated trivalent vaccine preparations.

Influenza has been sporadic throughout the State and also locally. This year, hospitals are required to report to the Public Health Department’s Disease Control Program all influenza cases (0-64 years of age) who are hospitalized in the intensive care unit (ICU) or who have become deceased. To date, there have been no influenza-related ICU hospitalizations or influenza deaths reported by hospitals.
Please see the chart showing the percentage of patients seen for Influenza-like Illness (ILI) by sentinel providers in the local Influenza Surveillance Program over the last several influenza seasons including the current 2010-2011 season.

Communicable Disease Program: Viral Meningitis

Santa Barbara County experienced an increase over normal seasonal levels of viral meningitis cases during these past summer/fall months which is when viral meningitis typically occurs. Throughout the state, there has also been an increase in viral meningitis consistent with what has been seen in previous years. From 2003 through 2009, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) received reports of over 21,000 cases of viral meningitis, with an average annual incidence rate of 8 cases per 100,000 population. The County’s average case count for viral meningitis from 2007-2009 averaged 30 per year. In 2010, 33 cases of viral meningitis have been reported through November 15th.

With the recent pertussis epidemic, influenza season, and viral meningitis cluster, there is a continued need for us to educate our patients and our community about the importance of hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette to do our part in the interruption of the chain of transmission and reducing or preventing disease incidence.