



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Free immunizations offered by Health District**

**Galveston County and Cities** – The Galveston County Health District will offer free immunizations as part of its strategic health priority and goals to immunize children against vaccine-preventable diseases during National Infant Immunization Week being observed April 19-26, 2008.

National Infant Immunization Week (NIIW) is an annual observance to educate the public about the importance of protecting infants from vaccine-preventable diseases and celebrate the achievements of immunization programs in promoting healthy communities.

To assist parents and others in making sure infants are adequately immunized the Health District has a reminder system for all families that access vaccinations in District operated immunization clinics.

"For children that receive immunizations in the District's public clinics, reminders are sent to parents when their children need their next shot. This has been very beneficial to improving compliance rates," according to Dr. Cassandra Arceneaux, GCHD Director of Community Health Services. "We also work all year long in the community distributing outreach and educational materials on the importance of immunizing on-time at health fairs and school programs."

Vaccine-preventable diseases are at an all-time low in the United States. However, these diseases still exist and continued vaccination is necessary to protect everyone from potential outbreaks. For example, in Galveston County last year there were 16 cases of acute Hepatitis B, 135 cases of chickenpox, one

HIB case and one whooping cough case. This highlights the continued importance of vaccinating children on-time.

Immunization is a shared responsibility. Families, healthcare providers, and public health officials must work together to help protect the entire community. Dr. Mark Guidry, Galveston County Health Authority says, "Properly immunizing is one of the most important things a parent can do for a child. Inadequately immunized children are not only at risk of contracting diseases, but they are also at risk of spreading diseases to their family members and others in the community. It is extremely important that children get their vaccinations in the prescribed timeframes."

Free immunizations will be given at Galveston County Health District Immunization Clinics on the following days.

**Dickinson**, 905 FM 517 E: Tuesday April 22, Thursday April 24, and Friday April 25, 8:30 – 11:30 am and 1 – 4 pm.

**Galveston**, 4700 Broadway: Monday April 21, 8:30 – 11:30 am and 1 – 4 pm; Wednesday April 23, 10 – 2 pm and 3 – 7 pm.

**Texas City**, 2000 Texas Ave: Monday April 21, Wednesday April 23, Thursday April 24, and Friday April 25, 8:30 – 11:30 am and 1-4 pm; Tuesday April 22, 10 – 2 pm and 3 – 7 pm

For more information readers can call the District's Immunization Services at (409) 938-2244.