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TO: Maine Immunization Providers
FROM: Maine Immunization Program
SUBJECT: 2013 National Infant Immunization Week (NIIW)

National Infant Immunization Week (NIIW) is an annual observance to highlight the importance of protecting infants from vaccine-preventable diseases in communities throughout the United States. This year, NIIW is scheduled to be held April 20-27.

We encourage you to use the attached posters to help promote the importance of vaccination in infants and surrounding family.

You can find links to information and materials related to (NIIW) at our website:
www.immunizeme.org

Key Points to remember about vaccines are:

- Vaccines are among the most successful and cost-effective public health tools available for preventing disease and death. They not only help protect vaccinated individuals, but also help protect entire communities by preventing and reducing the spread of infectious diseases.
- Infants are particularly vulnerable to infectious diseases; that is why it is critical to protect them through immunization. Each day, nearly 36 babies are born in Maine and 12,000 in the United States and all of them will need to be immunized against 14 vaccine-preventable diseases before age two.
- Immunization is a shared responsibility. Families, health care professionals and public health officials must work together to help protect the entire community.
- Health care professionals play a critical role in educating parents about the importance of immunization and ensuring that infants are fully immunized.
- Because of the success of vaccines in preventing disease, parents often are unaware that their children are at risk for so many serious and life-threatening diseases.
- Vaccine-preventable diseases still circulate in the United States and around the world, so continued vaccination is necessary to protect everyone from potential outbreaks. One example of the seriousness of vaccine-preventable diseases was the California whooping cough epidemic of 2010, resulting in the death of 10 infants. Nationally, there were more than 20,000 cases of whooping cough. There were 82 cases of whooping cough in Maine in 2010.
- Immunization is extremely safe. Vaccines are thoroughly tested before being approved for public use and monitored carefully by doctors, researchers and public health officials.

If you have any questions please call the Maine Immunization Program at 207-287-3746 or 1-800-867-4775.