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## Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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### **Public Health to offer free pertussis vaccinations in Juneau**

*Clinics will be held in two locations next week*

(Juneau, AK) — The city of Juneau has experienced a dramatic increase in pertussis (whooping cough) cases this fall. More than 80 cases of pertussis have been reported since July 2008, compared to only one case during this same time last year.

In an attempt to prevent further transmission of pertussis in Juneau, the State Division of Public Health is teaming up with the Juneau School District to offer free Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis) vaccinations to anyone ages 10 and older.

“This vaccine is the easiest way to protect yourself and your family from pertussis,” said Dr. Jay Butler, Alaska’s Chief Medical Officer. “The vaccine is especially important for families with infants or children with asthma or other respiratory illnesses.”

Children who have received the standard childhood vaccines are usually protected against pertussis through at least age 9; after that, the effectiveness of the vaccine begins to wane.

Pertussis vaccines will be available for all Juneau School District students, parents and staff:

- Tuesday, Dec. 16, from 2 to 8 p.m. at Floyd Dryden Middle School; and again on
- Wednesday, Dec. 17, from 2 to 8 p.m. at Dzantik’i Heeni Middle School.

Parents must either provide a consent form or accompany any child under age 18 and should bring their child’s shot records with them.

Pertussis is a highly contagious respiratory disease. The infection begins with a runny nose, sneezing, low-grade fever and a mild cough that gradually becomes more severe. The cough can continue for up to six weeks.

Recovery is gradual, with the cough becoming less severe and disappearing in two to three weeks. Pertussis was one of the most common childhood diseases and a major cause of childhood mortality in the United States in the 20th century.

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