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## Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Jan. 5, 2009

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### **New database to help doctors, parents track immunizations**

*VacTrAK to hold an Alaskan's entire vaccination record from birth to present day*

(Anchorage, AK) — Staff at health care clinics across the state can now enter Alaskans' immunization information into a new state database that will help patients, parents and health-care providers keep track of each resident's vaccine history.

The new database, called VacTrAK, is Alaska's first Web-based immunization information system. VacTrAK will be managed by the Division of Public Health, within the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services. The stored information will be confidential and accessible only by authorized health-care providers and designated state health officials, said Laurel Wood, Alaska's immunization program manager.

"We are pleased to be able to provide this important service for Alaskans," Wood said. "People frequently receive immunizations from multiple providers, so the ability to consolidate this information into one record will be of great benefit to patients and will provide important information for their health-care providers."

The department's goal is to enter as many immunization records as possible into VacTrAK so that Alaskans of all ages will have a complete list of their immunizations from birth to present day. This will allow authorized providers to review a patient's immunization history to determine if he or she needs a specific vaccine or already has received all recommended doses.

Many states already have similar immunization information systems, Wood said. In addition to informing daily clinic activities, such systems can be beneficial during emergencies. For example, in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, many children were displaced from Louisiana to other states, including Alaska. They had lost their medical records and faced challenges receiving appropriate vaccines and meeting immunization requirements for school enrollment in other states. Louisiana's immunization information system was used to provide confidential access to these children's vaccine records, easing their transition into new schools.

Parents in Alaska will benefit from VacTrAK's consolidated list of vaccinations, especially if their children have received vaccines at several different clinics. Over the years, children may change pediatricians, or move from one city to another. VacTrAK will allow all vaccines to be recorded in one centralized record. In the future, it's possible parents may receive secure passwords to access only their child's records. The system also may allow school officials to check the database to determine if students are up-to-date on immunizations required for attending schools and child-care facilities.

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