

William J. Streur
Acting Commissioner
P.O. Box 110601
Juneau, AK 99811-0601
www.hss.state.ak.us



Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Dec. 22, 2010

Contact: Greg Wilkinson, (907) 269-7285, Cell (907) 382-7032
gregory.wilkinson@alaska.gov
Ann Potempa, (907) 269-7957, Cell (907) 230-4001
ann.potempa@alaska.gov

Health survey seeks opinions on child vaccination

Officials looking for causes of relatively low immunization rates for children

(Anchorage, AK) — According to the most recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Immunization Survey, one-third of Alaska children have not received all the recommended vaccines to fully protect them against vaccine-preventable diseases.

The question is: Why not?

That's what Alaska's public health nurses and members of a workgroup trying to increase immunization rates are hoping to answer through the Alaska SHOTS survey. SHOTS stands for Searching for Hardships and Obstacles to Shots.

"The survey asks questions of parents in order to determine why their children haven't been completely immunized," said Marcy Custer, Maternal Child Health Consultant. "Are there problems getting to a clinic? What do parents believe about how important vaccines are? Are they worried about vaccine safety? Knowing the problems parents encounter will help us remove roadblocks, address their concerns, and hopefully increase childhood immunization rates."

Anyone with children 6 years or under is asked to take the SHOTS survey. This simple survey, which is completely voluntary and anonymous, should take fewer than five minutes to complete. It may be accessed at www.surveymonkey.com/s/AKSHOTS.

"As we look at the recent increase in whooping cough cases in California and other states, it's critical to the health and safety of Alaska's children that we break down barriers to childhood immunization," Custer said.

Alaska is ranked 46th out of the 50 states in infant/early childhood immunization completion rates.

###