



# epiConnections

A BIMONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE COMMUNICABLE DISEASE AND  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION OF BOULDER COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

## 2016-2017 School and Child Care Immunization Coverage in Boulder County

Recent state legislation and subsequent State Board of Health rule-making requires all K-12 schools (i.e. public, private and parochial), as well as licensed child care facilities, Head Start, and preschools that enroll 10 or more students to report immunization data to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) annually.

These data were reported in December 2016 for the first time and made public in June 2017, offering an unprecedented look at local variations in vaccine coverage in Colorado. More than 86 percent of schools and 75% of child care centers and preschools required to report to CDPHE did so. This allows us to understand the school and child care immunization status for nearly 1 million children.

On average in Colorado, 89.9-94.8% of students attending K-12 schools were up-to-date on their vaccines, depending on the vaccine. Despite these coverage rates, 57,366 Colorado K-12 students were considered not current or the 2016-2017 school year.

As seen in Table 1 below, there is a significant proportion of children who are not up-to-date on immunizations in both Boulder Valley School District (BVSD) and the St. Vrain Valley School District (SVVSD). While BVSD enrollment of 30,385 is about one-third of the size of both Denver County School District (85,343) and Jefferson County School District (83,843), the number of BVSD students behind on their vaccines approaches the same numbers for each of those larger districts. Naturally, vaccination status varies by school. Specific school and child care immunization data is available at: <https://www.cohealthdata.dphe.state.co.us/Data/Details/1#byschooldistrict>

Table 1: Immunization Record Status by School District

School District	Number of Enrolled Students in K-12	Number of Children Not Up-To-Date on Immunizations	Percent of Children Not Up-to-Date on Immunizations
Boulder Valley	30,385	4,259	14.0%
St. Vrain Valley	30,447	3,281	10.8%

For child care providers and preschools, the average up-to-date rate for required vaccines ranges from 91.3-93.1%. This means 8,001 Colorado children in child care or preschool are considered not up-to-date for all required vaccines, with the greatest numbers being in El Paso (1,281), Denver (951), Arapahoe (783), Boulder (753), and Jefferson (699) Counties, respectively.

*Immunization Coverage 2017, continued on page 2*

## Community Immunity: Joining Efforts to Increase Immunization Rates

Over the past two years, Boulder County Public Health has joined with the community to keep our kids healthy by reducing exposure to vaccine-preventable diseases, promoting best immunization practices, and facilitating vaccine educational events for providers.

In 2016, the pro-vaccine non profit called Community Immunity was founded by local parents Lindsay Diamond, PhD (Colorado's 2018 CDC Childhood Immunization Champion), and Karli Watson, PhD. As soon as they became parents, it became clear that they wanted to support other parents to make immunization decisions based on the best available science. "Our overarching goal is to reduce vaccine hesitancy and to increase immunization rates in Boulder County. Boulder County has some of the lowest immunization rates in the country, and we know that pockets of unimmunized individuals increases the risk for outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases. Vaccinations are effective and safe -- one of the greatest scientific advances in medical history. There's really no excuse for deaths resulting from vaccine-preventable disease," said Watson.

Community Immunity provides free or low-cost information to the community about immunization, advocates for immunizations at the state and local level, and supports the emergence of a pro-vaccine social network to support healthy communities. "There are two main prongs of Community Immunity's work: education and advocacy. We provide a brief educational module on immunizations at newborn care classes at Boulder Community Hospital, which provides the opportunity for parents to ask questions about vaccines. Inevitably, some parents have concerns about vaccinations for their newborn, and occasionally they have misinformation.

*Community Immunity: Joining Efforts, continued on page 2*



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Communicable Disease Control Program  
HIV Prevention Program  
Emergency Management Program  
Immunization Program  
TB Control Program

*Immunization coverage 2017, continued from page 1*

Colorado allows vaccine exemptions for religious, medical, or personal belief. The overall number of children with vaccine exemptions totaled 22,381 in K-12 and 2,480 in child care. The overwhelming majority of exemptions were for personal belief.

Table 2: Colorado Vaccination Exemptions by Type and School Setting, 2016–2017 School Year

Type of Exemption	K-12 Schools	Preschool & Child Care
Personal Belief Exemptions	88.1%	89.8%
Religious Exemptions	7.4%	6.8%
Medical Exemptions	4.5%	3.4%

Not vaccinating on schedule puts children at risk for serious illness and the community at risk for outbreaks. This is especially true for parents of immunocompromised children who rely on the community of school-aged children to help keep them protected. This back-to-school season, remind parents of the importance of vaccinating on schedule.

*Submitted by Marcela Shainis, Immunization Program, [MShainis@bouldercounty.org](mailto:MShainis@bouldercounty.org)*

*Community Immunity: Joining efforts, continued from Page 1*

Our goal is to deliver evidence-based information about vaccines in a supportive, non-judgmental atmosphere. In terms of advocacy, we are trying to bring together Boulder's pro-immunization parents and give them a voice at the local, state, and national levels. Although the overwhelming majority of Boulder parents choose to receive vaccinations for themselves and their children, they are typically the silent majority. We aim to create a social network such that these parents can reinforce the importance of immunization among themselves, among city authorities, and among state legislators," said Community Immunity.

Providers (e.g. family practice, pediatricians, OBs, PAs, etc.), parents, others who are interested are invited to join Community Immunity to better understand vaccine efficacy in the community, increase immunization rates in our schools, and promote safe spaces to talk about vaccines.

If you would like to learn more about Boulder County Public Health community engagement and educational events related to immunization, please contact Lesly Feaux at 303.413.7506 or [lfeaux@bouldercounty.org](mailto:lfeaux@bouldercounty.org). If you would like to join Community Immunity parent movement, please email them at [communityimmunityboulder@gmail.com](mailto:communityimmunityboulder@gmail.com).

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## epiEye

A Look Outside Our Community  
and Around the World

### Measles Around the World: Protecting our Children During International Travel

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), measles continues to be one of the leading causes of death among young children worldwide. Approximately 89,780 people died from measles in 2016; most of them were children under the age of 5 years. As summer approaches and families prepare to travel, immunizations should be part of that preparation.

The MMR vaccination can be given to children as young as 6 months old who are travelling internationally. While the dose will not be counted as part of the regular 2-dose series, it will help to protect the child while travelling and until they can receive their regular age-appropriate series beginning at 1 year of age.

Any dose of MMR vaccine given prior to 1 year of age will not count toward the 2-dose series recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and required by most schools so providers should continue to administer two additional doses according to the ACIP recommendation.

#### Resources

Current ACIP childhood immunization schedule and MMR footnotes: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/downloads/child/0-18yrs-child-combined-schedule.pdf>

WHO fact sheet: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs286/en/>

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### Survey Winner!

In the last issue we shared a short survey asking for feedback and suggestions to improve this newsletter. Your valuable input helped us to determine if *epiConnections* is meeting your needs.

We're please to announce the winner! Congratulations to Holly Markels, who won the \$50.00 Visa gift card.

Thank you to everyone who provided feedback.