



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS ADVISORY

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VACCINATION RATES UP, DEATHS DOWN ***San Diego Immunization Coalition Celebrates 20 Years of Fighting Disease***

WHAT: Local, state, and border health officials will gather in San Diego for the 20th Anniversary of the San Diego County Immunization Coalition, established in 1991 to increase vaccination rates among infants and children and reduce deaths in the region.

Officials will talk about immunizations, which are among the most successful and cost-effective public health achievements. The increased use of vaccinations has led to a reduction and prevention of disease.

WHO: **Chairman Bill Horn**, County of San Diego Board of Supervisors
Nick Macchione, Director, County Health and Human Services Agency
Wilma Wooten, M.D., M.P.H., County Public Health Officer
Mauricio Leiva, M.Ed., Chief, California Office of Binational Border Health
Jeff Sternberg, father of child exposed to 2008 measles outbreak

WHEN: **MONDAY, APRIL 25, 2011**
11:00 a.m.—News Conference
Noon—Anniversary Celebration

WHERE: **Crown Plaza San Diego**
2270 Hotel Circle North, San Diego, CA 92108

WHY: The San Diego County Immunization Coalition (SDIC) started as a result of the 1990 measles outbreak which sickened 985 people and resulted in three infant deaths.

Since then, SDIC has grown to include about 150 organizations that have worked together to develop strategies to raise immunization rates for all San Diego County residents. SDIC is one of the oldest continuously operating immunization coalitions in the nation.

April 23-30 is National Infant Immunization Week and Vaccination Week, annual observances that highlight the importance of protecting infants and children from vaccine-preventable diseases.

Before the introduction of the measles vaccine in 1963, as many as 500 children died each year from measles, and nearly 50,000 were hospitalized annually in the United States because of the virus, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In September 2010, the CDC announced that childhood immunization rates for vaccines routinely recommended for children remain at or near record highs.

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