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**For Immediate Release**  
February 13, 2012

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## **PROTECT YOUR CHILD FROM WHOOPING COUGH AND PREPARE FOR 7<sup>TH</sup> GRADE NOW**

BUTTE COUNTY, Calif. — The Butte County Public Health Department is promoting Preteen Vaccine Week, February 12-18, 2012 as a statewide effort to remind families of preteens about recommended and required immunizations for 11 and 12-year olds.

“It’s not too early to protect your child,” said Dr. Mark Lundberg, Health Officer for Butte County. “I encourage families of preteens to schedule a preteen doctor visit and get the shots they need to stay healthy and meet the school entry requirement for next fall.”

For the 2012-13 school year and beyond, all incoming 7<sup>th</sup> graders must provide proof of having immunization against whooping cough (‘Tdap’) before starting school. In light of California’s recent whooping cough (also known as pertussis) epidemic, there is no reason to wait for the new school year. Health professionals encourage parents to have their children vaccinated with the whooping cough booster shot, Tdap, now in order to protect them against whooping cough and to meet the school requirement.

“Butte County had only half the number of pertussis cases in 2011 as in 2010, and there were no infant deaths in California in 2011. We believe that can be attributed in part to great vaccination efforts,” stated Lundberg. “In any case, there will be no grace period this year. All incoming 7<sup>th</sup> graders will need to meet the Tdap requirement before starting school.”

From preliminary school reporting, an estimated 94% of 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders in Butte County received Tdap and 6% received exemptions. Final school data will be released once reporting is completed.

“Vaccination efforts have been successful in large part due to local providers keeping their adolescent patients up-to-date with recommended immunizations, as well as a partnership between local school districts and the public health department,” said Lundberg. Butte County Public Health partnered with local school districts to implement the new Tdap immunization requirement for the 2011-12 school year, spanning 6 grade levels. Multiple Tdap shot clinics were conducted at various sites throughout the county

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in 2011. The health department commends the efforts of all Butte County schools for successful implementation of the new school law.

Besides the Tdap shot, there are other immunizations that are now recommended for this age group. Shots that are recommended for 11 and 12-year-olds include:

- Meningococcal vaccine (MCV4) to protect against certain serious types of bacterial meningitis and other related infections
- Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine series that can protect girls against cervical cancer (a cancer in a part of the reproductive system); boys may also get this vaccine
- A second chickenpox vaccine
- An annual flu vaccine

If a child does not have health insurance, or is only partially insured, the doctor or your local health department can provide information about the Vaccines for Children Program which provides no or low-cost vaccines.

“Protecting the health of California’s youth is one of our most urgent priorities,” said Lundberg. “Preteen Vaccine Week is part of our commitment to ensuring our kids receive all the benefits immunizations can provide.”

For more information, please visit [www.shotsforschool.org](http://www.shotsforschool.org) or [www.GetImmunizedCA.org](http://www.GetImmunizedCA.org), or call the Butte County Public Health Immunization Program at 538-2840.

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### **Butte County Public Health Department**

Our Mission: To protect the public through promoting individual, community and environmental health.