



For Immediate Release:

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Contact: Shanen Wright, 304-397-4071

shanen.wright@wvruralhealth.org

West Virginia Immunization Network Announces 2008 Award Winners

Charleston, WV - The West Virginia Immunization Network (WIN) announced its 2008 Immunization Award winners at the third annual WIN Awards Luncheon January 23 at the University of Charleston. The five winning organizations were selected for their commitment to improving the health of West Virginians through immunizations.

Lincoln Primary Care Center, Kanawha-Charleston Health Department, Saint George Medical Clinic, Braxton County Health Department and Primary Healthcare Associates of Weston were all selected by the coalition for their exemplary efforts to increase immunization rates. The West Virginia Immunization Network is a statewide group of over 100 members representing public health, private industry, schools, third-party payers, health providers, policy makers, and others working to reduce the incidence of vaccine-preventable diseases.

Allison Kennedy, an epidemiologist from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, delivered the keynote address at the awards ceremony to more than fifty WIN members, immunization supporters, and elected officials. Her address centered on national efforts to immunize adolescents, a group not always associated with immunizations. She pointed out that immunization emphasis is often on children and seniors, but it's just as important for adolescents to be protected.

While Kennedy described multiple national efforts to increase immunization rates, she also emphasized that impact occurs in local communities. "Improving immunization coverage starts at the local level," she said. "That's where real change occurs."

WIN and the Center for Rural Health Development are currently targeting West Virginia adolescent immunization rates in the first phase of the WV Adolescent Immunization Project: Take Your Best Shot. The project has launched in seven pilot counties, with a goal of statewide reach within five years. To increase rates, WIN supplies local lead agencies with leadership, resource kits, evidence-based strategies and technical assistance to reach multiple spheres of adolescent influence in the community. The activities are carried out by the lead agencies.

"While our vision for the Adolescent Immunization Project is statewide reach, implementation will continue to follow a local approach," Center for Rural Health Development Vice President Shanen Wright said. "As Ms. Kennedy indicated, change starts at the local level, which is how WIN is working to position West Virginia at the forefront of states addressing the need to immunize our 11-21 year old population."

For more information, contact Mr. Wright at 304-397-4071 or shanen.wright@wvruralhealth.org.

2008 Immunization Award Winners:

- Kanawha-Charleston Health Department
- Braxton County Health Department
- Saint George Medical Clinic
- Lincoln Primary Care Center
- Primary Healthcare Associates

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