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West Virginia's Childhood Immunization Champion Recognized

Sharon Lansdale, CEO for the Center for Rural Health Development Receives Prestigious New Award

In recognition of National Infant Immunization Week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the CDC Foundation and the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources are honoring immunization advocates around the country with the first ever *CDC Childhood Immunization Champion* awards. This award acknowledges individuals who have made immunization successes possible in their community, including Sharon Lansdale, CEO for the Center for Rural Health Development in Hurricane, West Virginia.

"These *Champion* awards honor community leaders on the front lines who are ensuring that *all* children are vaccinated," said Dr. Howard K. Koh, Assistant Secretary for Health, U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. "As a former state commissioner of public health, I know that state and local commitment inspires the nation, protects children and saves lives."

Lansdale's work with community health centers in the state provided her inspiration to initiate, in conjunction with the West Virginia Immunization Network (WIN), the Take Your Best Shot statewide immunization awareness campaign targeting adolescent immunization. The Take Your Best Shot campaign started in 7 counties and has now been initiated in 38 counties throughout the state.

DHHR's Division of Immunization Services Director Jeff Neccuzzi said, "Sharon is a true immunization champion. We are appreciative of the CDC for recognizing Sharon's contributions to the immunization of children in our state."

Director of the CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases Dr. Anne Schuchat, said, "Vaccine-preventable diseases still circulate in the United States and elsewhere. Without the diligent efforts of our champions, these potentially deadly diseases would be an even greater threat to our nation's children. Each of us has the potential to be a champion by protecting children's health through immunization."

For more information about other *CDC Childhood Immunization Champion* award winners, please visit www.cdc.gov/vaccines/champions or go to www.immunization.wv.gov.