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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Health Officer

### **6<sup>TH</sup> GRADERS: GET A “TDAP BOOSTER” NOW**

#### *NEW SCHOOL IMMUNIZATION LAW FOR STUDENTS ENTERING 7TH GRADE*

STOCKTON, CA (April 30, 2012) – A California state law (AB 354), that took effect July 1, 2011, requires all students entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade each year to provide proof of having immunization against pertussis (whooping cough) before starting school. The new rule follows the state's worst outbreak of whooping cough in more than 50 years. San Joaquin County Health Officer Dr. Karen Furst advises that “Immunity gained from childhood pertussis vaccine wanes over time, so a Tdap booster shot is needed.”

The Tdap booster vaccine safely protects against 3 dangerous diseases: tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis. Pertussis is a highly contagious bacterial illness spread by coughs and sneezes. Dr. Furst recommends parents contact their child's health care provider now to insure their child is up-to-date on all immunization recommendations. Parents of current 6<sup>th</sup> grade students are urged to get their child's Tdap vaccine before school ends this year and take a copy of the child's shot record or other documentation to school as soon as possible.

A large number of students need a Tdap shot between now and the start of school next year. Make an appointment with your child's doctor or clinic for your child to get a Tdap booster shot now. Avoid the back-to-school rush. Getting the adolescent whooping cough shot now will not only help protect your child against the threat of whooping cough but will also meet the new school requirement.

School health officials want all students to be protected against disease and able to attend school on the first day without any disruptions. To achieve this, parents should take note of several important factors regarding the state immunization law for school entry in the 2012-13 school year:

- Seventh grade students without proof of a Tdap vaccination will not be allowed to register for classes or attend school;
- If a child has received one dose of Tdap vaccine on or after their 7th birthday, the requirement is met;
- It is not too early to get the Tdap booster;
- It is not too early to get the documentation in to the school;
- There will be no Tdap immunization clinics at the schools; and
- There will be no extension or grace period.

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For those who do not have a health care provider or health insurance, Tdap vaccinations are available at many local pharmacies and health clinics. Public Health Services Immunization Clinic schedules are available on the website, [http://www.sjcphs.org/Clinic/clinical\\_services.aspx](http://www.sjcphs.org/Clinic/clinical_services.aspx) or you may call 468-3830. Personal stories about pertussis and other vaccine preventable diseases can be found on the Shot by Shot website, <http://shotbyshot.org/>. For more details about the new school vaccination requirement and general information on pertussis, visit <http://www.shotsforschool.org/>.

For information about specific school districts call:	
Escalon Unified School District (EUSD) District Office	838-3591x5
Lincoln Unified School District (Lincoln USD) District Office	953-8712
Linden Unified School District (LindenUSD) Health Services	887-3608
Lodi Unified School District (LodiUSD) Health Services	331-7075
Manteca Unified School District (MUSD) Health Services	858-0782
New Hope, New Jerusalem and Jefferson School Districts	468-9296
Ripon Unified School District (RUSD) Health Services	652-8058
Stockton Unified School District (SUSD) Health Services	933-7060x2390
Tracy Unified School District (TUSD) Health Services	830-3241x2

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