

# CHENANGO COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### April 27 – May 4, 2019 marks the 25th Anniversary of National Infant Immunization Awareness Week

National Infant Immunization Week (NIIW) is an annual observance to highlight the importance of protecting infants from vaccine-preventable diseases and to celebrate the achievements of immunization programs in promoting healthy communities throughout the United States. This year NIIW is being celebrated April 27- May 4, 2019.

National Infant Immunization Week provides a valuable opportunity for us to remind our community how important it is for children to be vaccinated,” said Mary Klockowski, RN, Immunization Coordinator at Chenango County Department of Health. “Childhood vaccinations are one of the best ways for parents to protect their children against vaccine-preventable diseases.”

Vaccines are among the most successful and cost-effective public health tools available for preventing disease and death. They not only help protect vaccinated individuals, but also help protect those individuals who are unable to receive vaccines by preventing and reducing the spread of infectious diseases. Among children born during 1994-2018, vaccination will prevent an estimated 419 million illnesses, 26.8 million hospitalizations, and 936,000 deaths over the course of their lifetime.

Vaccines have been so successful in preventing disease that parents may not have heard of some of the serious diseases they prevent. These diseases can be especially serious for infants and young children. “By following the recommended immunization schedule, our infants and children are provided immunity early in life, before they are exposed to these deadly diseases” said Klockowski. Vaccine preventable diseases still circulate in the United States and around the world so continued vaccination is necessary to protect everyone from potential outbreaks. For example, despite being eliminated in the US, public health officials still report measles cases and outbreaks to the CDC. Six outbreaks have been reported so far this year. When communities of unvaccinated people in the US (such as people who refuse vaccines for religious, philosophical, or personal reasons) are exposed to the measles virus, outbreaks are more likely to occur.

If you have questions about the childhood immunization schedule, talk with your child’s doctor or nurse, or contact the Chenango County Health Department at (607) 337-1660. A schedule of Public Health’s convenient immunization clinics can be found on their website at

<http://www.co.chenango.ny.us/public-health/>. For more information about vaccines, go to

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents).

*Promoting and protecting health, safety, and the quality of life in Chenango County*