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N E W S

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GOVERNOR TAFT ANNOUNCES RECORD HIGH IMMUNIZATION RATES

COLUMBUS – Ohio’s childhood immunization rates are at record high levels, Governor Bob Taft said today.

More than 82 percent of Ohio children ages 19 to 35 months have been vaccinated against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, haemophilus influenzae type b and hepatitis B, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s 2003 National Immunization Survey.

“This surge in rates is terrific news for Ohioans and a tremendous victory for the entire public health community,” Taft said. “But we can still do better, and during National Immunization Awareness Month, I encourage all Ohioans to make sure their vaccinations are up-to-date.”

The increase to 82.3 percent is a 7.3 percent improvement from the 2002 rate of 75.0 percent, tops the national average of 79.0 percent and exceeds the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) strategic priority of vaccinating 77 percent of this population.

“Ohio’s children are Ohio’s future,” said ODH Director J. Nick Baird, M.D. “Today, that future looks healthier than ever.”

Taft and Baird announced the record high immunization rates at the Columbus City Health Department to highlight August as National Immunization Awareness Month.

“Ohio’s local health departments played a key role in this success story,” Baird said. “We are proud to be their partner at the state level.”

For more information on immunizations, visit the ODH Web site, <http://www.odh.state.oh.us>.