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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August is Immunization Awareness Month

It's getting close to back-to-school time! That means it's time to start thinking ...are my shots up-to-date?

Parents are preparing for the start of school, students are leaving for college and flu season is approaching. August is Immunization Awareness Month when parents and students are reminded that by staying up-to-date with recommended vaccines, you can protect yourself from serious, life-threatening diseases.

According to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the benefits of immunization for people of all ages are among the most significant public health achievements of our time. Vaccines have eradicated smallpox, eliminated poliovirus in the United States, and significantly reduced the number of cases of measles, diphtheria, rubella, pertussis and other diseases.

"Getting immunized is a lifelong, life-protecting effort regardless of age, sex, race, ethnic background or country of origin," said Diane Cusworth, Director of the Otsego County Department of Health. Recommended vaccinations begin at birth and continue throughout life.

"Getting these vaccines is critical to protecting ourselves, our families and our communities from disease," she said.

"Infants and young children are particularly vulnerable to infection, so it's important that parents make sure their children are properly immunized. This is especially critical from birth to four years old," she said.

"Most vaccines are given during the first five to six years of life. Certain other vaccines and boosters are recommended during adolescence and throughout adulthood," Diane Cusworth said.

Parents are encouraged to be mindful of their children's immunization schedules. "If you think that your child is lacking a vaccination or is possibly behind in their vaccination schedule, call your health care provider today. And also make sure that your own immunizations are current," Diane Cusworth said.

Vaccines are recommended for travelers against certain diseases that may be encountered when traveling outside the United States.

For more information about immunizations visit:

- The New York State Department of Health web site at www.nyhealth.gov.
- Otsego County Department of Health web site at www.otsegocounty.com/depts/doh
- or call:

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