



Vaccines and Immunizations

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**News and Media Resources:**

## **Immunization Works! February 2009 issue**

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*February 2009*

# **Immunization Update**

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*immunization works!*




The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Immunization Works Monthly Immunization Update is provided to professional organization partners for broad distribution to their members and constituencies. The information provided is non-proprietary.

## **Front Page News**

**Decisions of the U.S. Court of Federal Claims in Omnibus Autism Proceeding:** Three rulings related to autism and vaccine injury compensation cases were issued on February 12th by the Special Masters of the U.S. Court of Federal Claims. The rulings were part of the Omnibus Autism Proceeding created by the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program to handle the large volume of claims that vaccines induce autism. In order to ensure that the over 4,900 cases were dealt with in a timely manner, the U.S. Court of Federal Claims divided the claims into three different theories:

Theory 1: MMR in combination with thimerosal-containing vaccines can cause autism.

Theory 2: Thimerosal-containing vaccines alone can cause autism.

Theory 3: The MMR vaccine alone can cause autism. In three separate rulings, each of the Special Masters ruled that the measles-mumps-rubella vaccine, whether administered alone or in conjunction with thimerosal-containing vaccines, were not causal factors in the development of autism or autism spectrum disorders. The specific rulings can be found at: **U.S. Court of Federal Claim's Webpage** . Below is the statement issued by the Department of Health and Human Services:


### **Statement from the Department of Health and Human Services Regarding the Decisions of the U.S. Court of Federal Claims in the**

#### **Omnibus Autism Proceeding:**

As these cases illustrated, there's no doubt that autism and autism spectrum disorders place a heavy burden on many families. That is one reason why the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) continues to support research to better understand the cause of autistic disorders and develop more effective methods of treatment.

The medical and scientific communities have carefully and thoroughly reviewed the evidence concerning the vaccine-autism theory and have found no association between vaccines and autism. If parents have questions or concerns about childhood vaccines, they should talk with their child's health care provider.

Hopefully, the determination by the Special Masters will help reassure parents that vaccines do not cause autism.

More information is available from HHS about **autism and autism spectrum disorders**, and from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) about **the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program** . All HHS press releases, fact sheets and other press materials are available at the **HHS Newsroom**.



## NCIRD News

**Interim Leadership Changes within NCIRD:** CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD) has recently experienced some interim leadership changes. Dr. Anne Schuchat - who has served as NCIRD's Director since 2006 - will now serve as CDC's Interim Deputy for Science and Program. To advise partners of the changes, Dr. Schuchat has written a letter, printed in full below:

Dear Colleagues:

I want to let you know about some interim leadership changes within CDC and our center that have been put in place to help smooth our agency's functioning in the interim period before a permanent director has been identified. As you may already know, Dr. Rich Besser has been appointed to serve as Acting Director of CDC and ATDSR in the interim period before a permanent director is installed. He has established Interim Deputy Positions to help him lead the agency during this transition period, and has asked me to serve as the Interim Deputy for Science and Program. The other Deputy positions focus on management/budget; and on policy/legislation/communication.

I want to make sure you know that I am very committed to the mission, people, and partners of the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases and truly enjoy the work and impact that we have been able to achieve together. As many of you know, I'm also extremely committed to CDC and have been persuaded that I can be helpful to Dr. Besser and CDC during this interim period. Neither of us knows how long this interim period will last, but we intend to reevaluate the situation after three months.

I am fortunate to have so many talented people within NCIRD to sustain our focus during this interim period. During my detail, Beth Bell MD MPH will serve as Acting Director and Jane Seward MBBS MPH will serve as Acting Deputy Director of NCIRD. Melinda Wharton is continuing her detail as Acting Director of the Immunization Safety Office. I know that Beth and Jane will appreciate your support during this interim period, and I look forward to continuing our important efforts together after my detail ends.

Anne Schuchat, MD  
Deputy Director for Science and Program (Interim)  
RADM, US Public Health Service  
Assistant Surgeon General  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and ATSDR  
Atlanta, GA 30333



## Other News and Summaries

**Preventing Rotavirus Gastroenteritis in Infants and Children:** Rotavirus is the most common cause of severe gastroenteritis in infants and young children worldwide. Before initiation of the rotavirus vaccination program in the United States in 2006, approximately 80% of U.S. children had rotavirus gastroenteritis by the age of 5. Each year during the 1990s and early 2000s, rotavirus resulted in approximately 410,000 physician visits, 205,000-272,000 emergency department visits, and 55,000-70,000 hospitalizations among U.S. infants and children, with total annual direct and indirect costs of approximately \$1 billion. In February 2006, a live, oral, human-bovine reassortant rotavirus vaccine (RotaTeq® [RV5]) was licensed as a 3-dose series for use among U.S. infants for the prevention of rotavirus gastroenteritis, and **The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)** recommended routine use of RV5 among U.S. infants. In April 2008, a live, oral, human attenuated rotavirus vaccine (Rotarix® [RV1]) was licensed as a 2-dose series for use among U.S. infants, and in June 2008, ACIP updated its rotavirus vaccine recommendations to include use of RV1. ACIP recommends routine vaccination of U.S. infants with rotavirus vaccine, but does not express a preference for either RV5 or RV1. For more information, please see the **full MMWR rotavirus article** in CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report.

**Global Health Community Commits Over \$630 Million to Eradicate Polio:** In a recent push to eradicate polio - a crippling and sometimes fatal disease that paralyzes children - Rotary International,

the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the British and German governments recently committed more than \$630 million in new funds. In addition to pledging needed funds, leaders urged additional donors and leaders of countries where polio still exists to join them in aggressive push for eradication. Polio has been completely eliminated in the Americas, the Western Pacific, and Europe, but the wild polio virus persists in Afghanistan, India, Nigeria, and Pakistan. It is in these four countries that the most serious challenges exist, including vaccine effectiveness (India), low vaccination coverage rates (Nigeria), and access problems due to conflict (Afghanistan and Pakistan). Imported cases from these countries threaten other developing nations. For video and still photos, please see the **press release from Rotary International** [🔗](#).



## Meetings, Conferences & Resources

**Video Contest for Teens:** Singer/songwriter and former American Idol finalist Brooke White has teamed up with infectious diseases specialist Dr. Harley Rotbart and The Clorox Company to encourage teenagers to practice flu prevention, given the CDC's expanded flu vaccination recommendations that now include teenagers. Encourage teenagers you know to enter the "I Don't Want to Miss..." PSA contest on **www.IDontWanttoMiss.com** [🔗](#), where teens can explain in 45-60 seconds what they would not want to miss out on if they came down with the flu. The teen with the winning video gets a free Brooke White concert at his/her school. PSA entries are due March 11th.

**Get Ready for National Infant Immunization Week:** National Immunization Week (NIIW) will be celebrated April 25-May 2, 2009 in conjunction with Vaccination Week in the Americas (VWA). The theme for NIIW is "Love them. Protect them. Immunize Them." Visit the **NIIW Events Webpage** for planning and evaluation resources, public relations materials, and communication campaign materials. Add your local activity to the **National Calendar of NIIW Events**.

**ACIP Meeting: The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)** will hold its next meeting on February 25-26, 2008 at the CDC in Atlanta, Georgia. This meeting is open to the general public, but advanced registration is required.

**2009 Schedules, Now Available in Spanish: The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)** annually publishes immunization schedules that summarize recommendations for currently licensed vaccines. The 2009 Recommended Immunization Schedules for Persons 0-18 and Recommended Adult Immunization Schedule are now available in Spanish. To access these versions, go to the **Child and Adolescent Schedules Webpage** and the **Adult Immunization Schedule Webpage** and scroll to find the Spanish schedules under "other versions."

**Monovalent M-M-R Vaccines during Supply Shortages:** CDC has developed a fact sheet of **Q&As about Monovalent MMR Vaccines during Supply Shortages**.

**Parents Who Question Vaccines:** The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has published an **article for parents who question why there are so many vaccines and why they are given at a young age** [🔗](#) and a new audiocast training **Countering Vaccine Misinformation** [🔗](#). Both are tools to assist pediatricians and others in responding to parents' concerns about vaccines. The training is part of a monthly series and is offered free of charge through April 30, 2009.

**Increasing Adult Vaccination Rates: What Works:** CDC's training course on adult immunization has been revised to reflect recently approved recommendations from The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). **Increasing Adult Vaccination Rates: What Works** is a web-based self-paced course that outlines tips and proven strategies to strengthen a clinic's adult immunization rates. Free continuing education credits are available.

**Mark Your Calendars for NIC:** Make plans now to attend **The National Immunization Conference (NIC)**, "Blazing the Trail to Healthier Living." The conference will be held March 30–April 2, 2009 at the Sheraton Dallas. The **draft NIC agenda** [🔗](#) is now posted.

**Annual Conference on Vaccine Research:** CDC and 11 other national and international agencies and organizations will collaborate with the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases in sponsoring the Twelfth Annual Conference on Vaccine Research, April 27-29, 2009, at the Marriott Waterfront Hotel, Baltimore, Maryland. The conference is the largest scientific forum devoted exclusively to the research and development of all vaccines and related technologies for prevention and treatment of disease


through immunization. For more information on the **Annual Conference on Vaccine Research** , visit the Conference Webpage.

**CDC Training Opportunities:** Through established programs, CDC offers many unique training opportunities in infectious disease, including international opportunities. For a current listing of CDC training opportunities, please visit the **CDC Public Health Training Webpage**.

**CDC Job Openings:** CDC is committed to recruiting and hiring qualified candidates for a wide range of immunization positions. Researchers, Medical Officers and Epidemiologists and other specialties are often needed to fill positions within CDC. For a current listing, including international opportunities, please visit the **CDC Employment Webpage**.

The Immunization Works Database Manager can be contacted at: **nipimmzwrks@cdc.gov**.



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**Page Located on the Web at <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/news/newsletters/imwrks/2009/200902.htm>**

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