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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

July 31, 2024

**GTCHD Highlights Back-to-School Immunization**

*August is National Immunization Month*

The Grand Traverse County Health Department (GTCHD), in partnership with the Northern Michigan Public Health Alliance, is proud to recognize National Immunization Month this August. As families prepare for the back-to-school season, we want to highlight the critical role that vaccinations play in protecting our communities, especially our children, from preventable diseases.

As students return to classrooms, the importance of complying with the [recommended immunization schedule](#) becomes even more significant. Vaccinations are a safe and effective way to prevent the spread of infectious diseases such as whooping cough, chickenpox, and measles, which we continue to see each year despite their preventable nature.

“Childhood vaccination rates dropped locally and across the country as a result of the pandemic, but they are slowly increasing back to pre-pandemic levels,” said GTCHD Medical Director Najibah Rehman, MD, MPH. “However, there are children in our county that are under-vaccinated for vaccine-preventable diseases that limit us from reaching herd immunity for the general population. We do see cases like Pertussis and Chickenpox, so keeping up with the vaccination schedule is not only protective for your child, but it prevents outbreaks in families and social settings, like school, summer camp, etc.”

National Immunization Month serves as a reminder for parents and guardians to check their children's immunization records and schedule any necessary vaccinations before the school year begins. Staying up to date with immunizations is a vital step in safeguarding public health and ensuring that all children can learn and grow in a safe environment. To learn more about recommended immunization schedules, [click here](#).

If a parent believes their child has missed any shots or needs to schedule an appointment, contact their primary care provider, call our team at 231-995-6131, or [visit our website](#) to learn more about what we offer for immunizations. GTCHD offers vaccines through the Vaccines for Children Program, bills most insurance, and has additional support to help cover the cost for families. No one will be turned away due to the inability to pay.

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