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PRESS RELEASE-For Immediate Release

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Public Health Identifies Cases of Pertussis (Whooping Cough) in South Central Idaho

TWIN FALLS- Health officials have identified six cases of Pertussis (whooping cough) in the last two weeks - one case in Lincoln, one case in Gooding, and 4 cases in Twin Falls. Local exposures have occurred and are being investigated. It is important to check your children's vaccination status. Adults are also at risk for the disease and may receive one Pertussis booster vaccine.

South Central Public Health District (SCPHD) considers Pertussis a serious disease because it is frequently complicated by pneumonia and ear infections (especially in infants) although death is rare. Symptoms usually develop within one to two weeks after contact with a person with Pertussis. Early signs include a persistent cough that follows a cold. The cough usually occurs in explosive bursts ending with a typical high-pitched whoop as the person catches their breath. It can also cause vomiting. Between bursts of coughing, the person appears well; but the coughing attacks can continue for four to six weeks. Older children or adults may have less severe symptoms. People with a cough are contagious for three weeks if untreated and for five days after treatment has begun.

Persons experiencing symptoms of Pertussis should consult their health care provider. Special tests may be done to confirm the diagnosis. Care should be taken to limit exposure to other people through good cough hygiene covering the mouth when coughing and washing hands often. Antibiotics are used to treat the disease and are also given to known contacts of the person with Pertussis in an effort to control the spread of the disease.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends adults from 19 to 64 years of age and adolescents 11-18 years of age now be vaccinated with a newly licensed vaccine booster for tetanus, diphtheria, and Pertussis (known as the Tdap vaccine). Under the ACIP recommendation, the Tdap vaccine would replace one dose of the currently recommended tetanus-diphtheria vaccine that is used as the adult or adolescent booster vaccine. The ACIP recommends adults receive a booster dose of Tdap vaccine against tetanus, diphtheria, and Pertussis if they have not received a tetanus and diphtheria (Td) booster dose in ten or more years. If an individual has already been vaccinated with Td at intervals shorter than 10 years, they should check with their physician about the correct time to receive a dose of this new vaccine.

The new vaccine helps protect adults from Pertussis and also reduces the risk of transmitting Pertussis to infants and those most at risk to develop serious or life-threatening complications.

For more information on Pertussis, please contact SCPHD Epidemiologist Manager, Mary Jensen, at 737-5969.

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