

## MEDIA RELEASE

3 March 2016

### **Childhood immunisation rates in Sydney's north lagging behind national rates and new whooping cough booster shot for 18-month olds**

A new report into childhood immunisation rates for one, two and five year olds has highlighted that Northern Sydney is not keeping pace with national rates, and is significantly under the recommended 95% rate required to maintain herd immunity.

The National Health Performance Authority (NHPA) report found children in the one year age group had a 90.8% immunisation rate compared against a national 91.3%, while two year olds in Sydney's north were 87.6% compared to 89.2% nationally. Children in the five year age group showed the strongest immunisation rates at 92.2% nationally, however locally it was 90.4%.

Sydney North Health Network Chair and general practitioner Dr Magdalen Campbell said: "We are carefully monitoring the situation and working with both the community and our network of health professionals including GPs and the Northern Sydney Public Health Unit to identify strategies to improve immunisation rates across the Sydney north region."

"Immunisation plays a vital role in safe guarding our community against diseases like whooping cough, measles, mumps, polio and other diseases.

"Improving immunisation rates calls for community support: Parents can use resources like the 'save the date' vaccination app to remind them about their child's next vaccination. If unsure about your child's vaccination status speak to your GP or you can access a report from the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register through Medicare," said Dr Campbell.

According to public health data, whooping cough rates grew by 400% in the two years to peak at 2356 notifications in 2015 in Sydney's north. This increase was consistent with rates across the state.

"Pregnant women should chat to their Doctor about being safeguarded against whooping cough in the last trimester of their pregnancy, as this will assist with immunity for the unborn child," Dr Campbell warned.

A new 18-month old whooping cough booster shot was added to the childhood immunisation schedule in February 2016 and will be available later this month to families through their GP and nurse immunisation clinics.

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Notes to editor:

1. The report from the National Health Performance Authority (NHPA), shared information on the percentages of children aged 1, 2 and 5 years who were fully immunised in 2014-15 and was split into the 31 areas covered by the new Primary Health Networks (PHN). Northern Sydney PHN, is operated by Sydney North Health Network. [CLICK HERE](#) For the NHPA report
2. The region of SNHN spans 899 square kilometres, aligns with the Northern Sydney Local Health District and encompasses 11 Local Government Areas (LGAs): [CLICK HERE](#) for map of the region and more information
3. For community resources these links are recommended:  
Save the date: <http://www.immunisation.health.nsw.gov.au/>  
[North Sydney Immunisation Clinic](#)  
[Ku-ring-gai Council Immunisation Clinic](#)  
[Ryde Immunisation Clinic](#)

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**Interview Opportunities**

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