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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CARSON CITY/DOUGLAS COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP NEWS RELEASE

Health Alert: Pertussis (Whooping Cough) in Carson City/Douglas County

Carson City/Douglas County, Nev. – Carson City Health & Human Services (CCHHS) is reporting an increase of positive pertussis (commonly known as whooping cough) cases in the Carson City and Douglas County areas. The Disease Control and Prevention Division at CCHHS oversees disease surveillance and investigations in Carson City and Douglas County and is currently investigating the increase. At this time, CCHHS is reporting the outbreak as an isolated event; however, the Health Department is encouraging families in the community to take preventive measures.

If you believe that you or your child has signs and symptoms of pertussis (whooping cough) or have questions about the illness, please contact your healthcare provider immediately. You can also contact the Health Department at (775) 283-7220 or email CCHHSinfo@carson.org.

Whooping cough—or pertussis—is a very serious respiratory (in the lungs and breathing tubes) infection caused by the pertussis bacteria. It causes violent coughing you can't stop. Whooping cough is most harmful for young babies and can be deadly.

Whooping cough starts with the following symptoms:

- Runny or stuffed-up nose
- Sneezing
- Mild Cough
- A pause in breathing in infants (apnea)

After 1 to 2 weeks, coughing, which can be severe, begins. Children and babies may then begin to develop these more serious problems:

- Coughing, very hard and continual.
- Gasping for breath after a coughing fit. They may make a “whooping” sound. This sound is where the name “whooping cough” comes from. Babies may not cough or make this sound—they may gag and gasp.
- Difficulty breathing, eating, drinking, or sleeping because of coughing fits. These coughing fits happen more at night.
- Turning blue while coughing from lack of oxygen.
- Vomiting after coughing fits.

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Coughing fits can last for 10 weeks, and sometimes happen again the next time the child has a respiratory illness.

Whooping cough is most dangerous for babies and young children. In fact, babies younger than 1 year old who have pertussis may:

- Need to be cared for in the hospital
- Develop pneumonia (a serious lung infection)
- Have seizures (jerking or twitching of the muscles or staring)
- Suffer brain damage

Whooping cough can even be deadly. From 2000 through 2014, there were 277 deaths from whooping cough reported in the United States. Almost all of the deaths (241 of the 277) were babies younger than 3 months of age, who are too young to be protected against whooping cough by getting the shots.

Whooping cough spreads easily through the air when a person who has whooping cough breathes, coughs, or sneezes. Almost everyone who is not immune to whooping cough will get sick if exposed to it. A person can spread the disease from the very beginning of the sickness (when he has cold-like symptoms) and for at least 2 weeks after coughing starts.

Your baby can catch whooping cough from adults, grandparents, or older brothers or sisters who don't know they have the disease. New moms with whooping cough can give it to their newborn babies.

The best way to protect children against whooping cough is by having them get the diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis shot, also called the DTaP shot. For everyone 11 years of age and older, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis (Tdap) shot.

For more information about pertussis, visit the Health Department web page <http://gethealthycarsoncity.org/pertussis-whooping-cough/> or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) web page <https://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/>.

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