

Free Vaccines for Clark County Students

Youth under the age of 19 are able to get free immunizations to keep themselves up to date and healthy for the approaching school year. All vaccines required to enroll in school in the State of Washington are free, though some administrators may charge a small administrative fee, which can be waived for low-income families who ask. Vaccinations protect children from many serious diseases and are required for most students entering various grade levels. Sometimes, the cost of immunization can be prohibitive, but Clark County students can go to a number of clinics and receive them free of charge.

Part of the push for widespread immunization comes after Clark County experienced a large whooping cough outbreak in 2015, with 259 cases as of late July, compared with only 25 cases by this time last year. "We're starting to see fewer new cases now school is out and kids aren't spending as much time in close contact," said Dr. Alan Melnick, Clark County Health Officer. "However, we're concerned that this potentially serious disease could make a comeback in the fall, after school starts. My message to parents is to please make sure your kids are current on their whooping cough vaccines



Children require immunizations to enroll in Washington schools and this year they're being offered free of charge to families in need.

and all other recommended vaccines."

Most Washington students are

required to stay current on their vaccinations to enroll in school. However, just over 5% of Washington's students in the last school year were exempted for religious

or personal reasons. Clark County's vaccine exemption rate is even higher at 7%, and ranged up to 43% in local schools. "This is concerning because many diseas-

es require high vaccination rates to ensure there's enough widespread immunity in the population to protect others who have not developed immunity or are unable to get vaccinated," said Dr. Melnick.

A number of clinic options are available. The Battle Ground Community Center, 912 E. Main St. will host their free immunization clinic on Friday, Aug. 21 from 3 to 6 p.m. by appointment, which can be made by calling (360) 566-4409. The Free Clinic of Southwest Washington, 4100 Plomondon St. will offer a walk-in immunization service for uninsured children only on the first and third Wednesday of the month from 5 to 7 p.m. and can be reached at (360) 313-1390. Hudson Bay High School, 1601 E. McLoughlin Blvd. will offer a back-to-school immunization clinic on Wednesday, Aug. 19 from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and can be reached at (360) 313-4733. The Sea Mar Community Health Centers at 7410 E. Delaware Lane will offer their free vaccinations for children under the age of 19 on Thursday, Aug. 27 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. by appointment only and can be reached at (360) 566-4409. For more information, Clark County residents are encouraged to visit doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/Schools/Immunization/VaccineRequirements.



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Faith Leader Open to Change

Welcomes women into Baptist leaders group

The Rev. J. Walter Hills II of New Hope Missionary Baptist Church will lead a group of historically black churches in Portland.

Rev. Hills was installed as moderator of the Portland Union Baptist District Association at their 60th annual session last month. The group represents affiliated African-American Baptist churches in Portland.

The outgoing moderator, Rev. Carland Allen of Greater Mt. Gilard Baptist Church, was recognized during the session for his leadership for the past five years. Additionally, installed as the vice moderators were The Rev. Craig Brown of the St. Paul Baptist Church and The Rev. Victor Reynolds of the New Covenant Baptist Church.

Rev. Hills hails from Columbia, S.C., and recently celebrated his second anniversary as the pastor of New Hope. The 32 year old



Rev. J. Walter Hills II

also serves as Third Vice President of the General Baptist Convention of the Northwest.

In a message to his fellow faith leaders, he said he wanted to be an agent for change, to build "strong leaders, stronger churches, better people and a better district."

One of his recommendations was to open the group's membership to those churches who have

female pastors. The district traditionally has been one which registered churches with male pastors only.

His other plans include introducing new ministries and programs, engaging and investing in our youth, and much more.

Rev. Hills is married to the former Rhyann Michelle Adams, and they are the parents of two children.