



OFFICE OF GOVERNOR PAT QUINN

# NEWS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
Tuesday, August 21, 2012

**CONTACT:** Brooke Anderson (o. 312-814-3158; c. 312-590-0195)  
Annie Thompson (o. 217-782-7355; c. 217-720-1853)

## **Governor Quinn Signs Law to Keep Children Healthy**

### *Law to Increase Access to Vaccines as Kids Head Back to School*

CHICAGO – August 21, 2012. Governor Pat Quinn today continued his commitment to improving the health and wellness of Illinois children by signing a new law that will make it easier for them to receive flu shots and other preventative vaccines. With the start of the new school year quickly approaching and cases of whooping coughing increasing across Illinois, the governor visited pharmacies in Chicago, Rockford, Milan and Peoria to let parents know about their new options.

“We are blessed with modern medicines that can prevent illnesses, but we must make sure children have access to them,” Governor Quinn said. “This new law means more children will be getting vaccinated, which means healthier children, healthier families and fewer days away from school.”

Senate Bill 3513, sponsored by Sen. Iris Martinez (D-Chicago) and Rep. Dan Burke (D-Chicago), allows pharmacists to administer influenza and TDAP (tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis) vaccines to children ages 10 to 13, with a valid prescription from a licensed physician. Previous law had allowed children only as young as 14 to receive these shots from pharmacists. With nearly 630,000 more children getting vaccinated, outbreaks of influenza and other diseases will be less widespread. The law takes effect immediately.

“Thanks to this legislation, families with younger children will no longer have to seek out and travel to medical facilities that may be far away. Now, they’ll have the convenient option of going to any of their local pharmacies that offer these shots,” said Sen. Martinez.

Governor Quinn was joined in encouraging parents across Illinois to get their children vaccinated as soon as possible by local leaders, the Illinois Retail Merchants Association and pharmacists at Walgreens, CVS, Target and Kroger, which are among the many Illinois retail stores that offer vaccinations for children and adults.

“We’re proud to join Governor Quinn in helping to provide greater access to immunizations for families and neighborhood communities throughout Illinois,” said Mark Wagner, president of operations and community management, Walgreens. “Our pharmacists have played an integral role in improving immunization rates for flu and other diseases, and with today’s legislation, Walgreens pharmacists will serve as an even more valuable health care and immunizations resource in helping people get, stay and live well.”

“Expanding access to vaccinations is critical especially for children, and the collaboration between the retail pharmacy and medical community to make vaccinations more readily available is an example of sound public policy,” said David Vite, President/CEO, Illinois Retail Merchants Association. “Allowing parents to get their children vaccinated at the local pharmacy gives them a quick, easy and inexpensive way to meet the changing vaccination needs of the public schools, and we should thank Governor Quinn and the legislature for making access much easier for busy families.”

-MORE-



**OFFICE OF GOVERNOR PAT QUINN**

---

# NEWS

As part of August being National Immunization Awareness Month, the Illinois Department of Public Health is reminding parents and health care providers that all sixth and ninth graders are now required to show proof of having received the TDAP vaccine before being allowed to attend school. The shot includes protection against pertussis (commonly known as whooping cough) which has been on the rise in Illinois. In 2011, health care providers reported 1,509 pertussis cases to IDPH for the entire year. With five months still to go in 2012, providers have already reported more than 1,300 cases of pertussis.

“The single most important thing parents can do to protect their children against whooping cough and other preventable diseases is to receive a vaccination,” said IDPH Director Dr. LaMar Hasbrouck.

For more information about vaccinations, please contact the Illinois Department of Public Health at 217-782-4977 or online at <http://www.idph.state.il.us/home.htm>.

###