



## MEDICAL DIRECTOR REPORT TO THE BOARD OF HEALTH

Central Michigan District Health Department  
"Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities"

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### Report to the Board of Health

March 26, 2014

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#### Influenza

Individual and aggregate reports are significantly lower than levels seen during the same time period last year (early March). The Michigan Department of Community Health reported two pediatric deaths in Michigan due to influenza this influenza season.

#### Pertussis

Whooping cough continues to move amongst Michiganders. There have been cases in Gladwin, Clare, Isabella, and Clinton Counties. Fortunately, there have been no pediatric deaths. The last case of Pertussis in District 10 was reported back in October.

Little kids, especially kids under the age of one year, are vulnerable to the ravages of pertussis. Lung tissue is damaged and the ability to clear secretions is reduced. Pneumonia can develop and occasionally inflammation of the brain will occur.

The best course of action is to prevent the disease before it can infect a child. Moms, dads, siblings, grandparents, and any care provider should have an up to date vaccination against whooping cough. If people in a child's life are protected then little kiddies whose immune system isn't developed are less likely to become infected with the pertussis germ.<sup>i</sup>

**Update on PBB Study in Gratiot County** Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, is pursuing additional research on the possible health effects of PBB (Poly Brominated Biphenols) on human health. PBB's were added to children's clothing, and added to plastics of all kinds as flame retardants. PBB's were unknowingly distributed to Michigan farms in the 1970's. PBB's were fed to cattle, chickens, and pigs by unsuspecting farmers. Farmers were devastated by the loss of their livestock and many lost their means of livelihood.

PBB's have been linked to decreased quality and number of lymphocytes in a person exposed to PBB's<sup>ii</sup>. Another established fact is that girls exposed to high levels of PBB's while in utero are more likely to start their periods at an earlier age<sup>iii</sup>.

The current research project steps include collecting blood, urine, and semen samples, collecting body morphological measurements, and collecting detailed medical histories on volunteer subjects. At this time (March 14, 2014) there is no new information to share regarding the outcome of the project.

#### Recommendations of the Board of Health

Whooping cough continues to spread through our communities. Pregnant women, family members and care givers of newborns are urged to get vaccinated against whooping cough<sup>i</sup>.

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<sup>i</sup> MMWR December 15, 2006 / 55(RR17);1-33

<sup>ii</sup> Science 17 March 1978: Vol. 199 no. 4334 pp. 1207-1209

<sup>iii</sup> Blanck, HM, M Marcus, PE Tolbert, C Rubin, AK Henderson, VS Hertzberg, RH Zhang and L Cameron. 2000. Age at menarche and Tanner stage in girls exposed in utero and postnatally to polybrominated biphenyl. Epidemiology 11:641-647