

Tennessee Celebrates Child Health Week

NASHVILLE – Governor Bill Haslam has proclaimed October 6-12, 2014, **Child Health Week** in Tennessee, and the Tennessee Department of Health is encouraging all Tennesseans to put the health and well-being of children first during Child Health Week and every week of the year.

“Each of us has the power to do our part to help keep our children in Tennessee healthy and on the right track,” said TDH Commissioner John Dreyzehner, MD, MPH. “We can all be good examples for children in our state, helping them make good lifestyle choices like being physically active, eating healthy food in the right portions, avoiding tobacco and modeling other good habits like wearing seat belts and bike helmets, brushing teeth, and getting immunizations and regular checkups. Healthy children today will lead to a future of healthy and prosperous Tennessee adults.”

This year’s Child Health Week theme is “**A Healthy Tennessee Begins with a Healthy Me,**” emphasizing the role of each individual in achieving good health for our state. In recent years, Tennessee has seen marked improvements in rates of infant mortality, births to teen mothers, childhood immunization and child deaths.

“There are many resources that are available to help Tennessee families keep their children healthy,” said Michael D. Warren, MD, MPH, TDH director of Family Health and Wellness. “The Welcome Baby Initiative is one way that we support families, especially new parents.” All Tennessee families with newborns (about 80,000 per year) receive informational packets about child development, parenting and state programs from the Tennessee Department of Health. Some will receive follow-up calls from a trained nurse or an outreach visit in the home. This is part of the effort to bring down the state’s above-average infant mortality rate. “Our Welcome Baby initiative is an important part of our efforts to reduce infant mortality rates and improve early childhood health in Tennessee by helping equip families with the knowledge and skills needed to raise happy and healthy children,” said Dr. Warren.

Another great resource for families with young children is kidcentral tn, available at <http://www.kidcentraltn.com>. Sponsored by the Tennessee Governor’s Children’s Cabinet, kidcentral tn offers a convenient source of reliable information about child health, education, and development. Families can also enter their zip

code to find nearby state services, create a profile to help track their child's developmental milestones and even download an app for their mobile devices. "The easy-to-use collection of resources at kidcentral tn puts resources at the fingertips of Tennessee parents," said Dr. Dreyzehner.

In addition to resources like Welcome Baby and kidcentral tn that support families every day, special activities are being planned to celebrate Child Health Week 2014. TDH has information about this year's Child Health Week activities and local events, along with resources for parents, schools and communities available online at <http://health.tn.gov/MCH/CHW.shtml>.

The mission of the Tennessee Department of Health is to protect, promote and improve the health and prosperity of people in Tennessee. For more information about TDH services and programs, visit <http://health.state.tn.us/>.