



**Mahoning County**

## ***DISTRICT BOARD OF HEALTH***

*RESEARCH BRIEF November 2008*

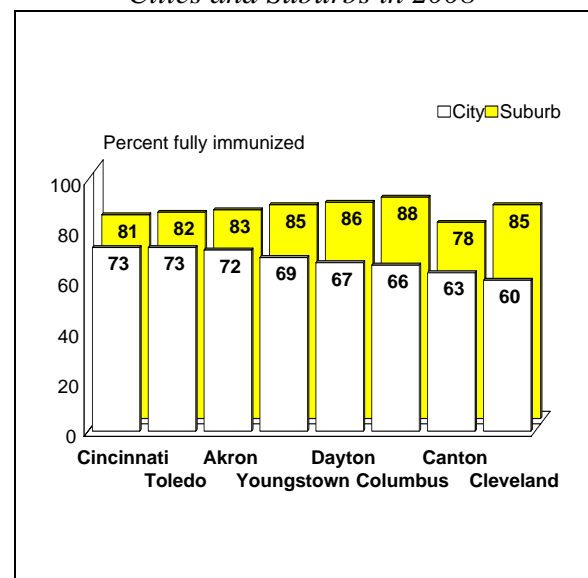
### ***SURVEY FINDS YOUNGSTOWN AREA CHILD IMMUNIZATION RATES LAG BEHIND OTHER MAJOR OHIO CITIES***

Youngstown was 4<sup>th</sup> among the eight major cities in Ohio for up-to-date immunization of two-year olds in 2008, according to a survey of kindergarten immunization records conducted by the Ohio Department of Health. The survey reviewed the immunization records of 359 kindergartners born between October 2, 2001 and October 1, 2002 who were enrolled in 19 Youngstown public and parochial schools and found that 69% of the children were fully immunized against measles, polio, diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis by their second birthdays.\* Child immunization rates have not increased in Youngstown since the survey was last conducted in 2004 when the survey found 70% of kindergartners fully-immunized.

Youngstown suburbs fared somewhat better in the survey – 85% of 282 kindergartners in 6 Boardman public and private schools whose shot records were reviewed in the survey were fully immunized by their 2<sup>nd</sup> birthdays. Boardman was tied for 3<sup>rd</sup> among suburbs of the eight major Ohio cities in the 2008 survey. Boardman children's immunization rates have reached their highest level observed since this survey began in 1992.

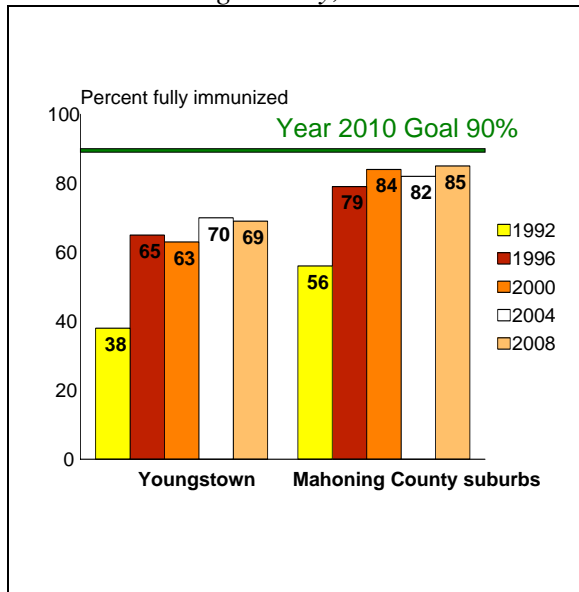
Local and statewide child immunization rates began to increase after 1992 when public health officials started to emphasize the importance of on-time immunization for infants and toddlers. Even though immunization rates have improved significantly since the 1990's, the lag in improvements during this current decade makes it likely that the Youngstown area will fall short of a goal set by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to fully immunize 90 percent of two year-olds by 2010.

*Child Immunization Rates in Ohio's Major Cities and Suburbs in 2008*



Further improvements in child immunization rates will require a coordinated community effort from both the public and private sectors to promote timely immunization of infants and toddlers. Since 1992, local boards of health have reduced barriers to timely immunization by offering "express lane" shot clinics and well-child clinics at many convenient locations in the area. As a result, families in Mahoning County have many options for obtaining free or low-cost immunizations for their children.

*Increasing Child Immunization Rates in Mahoning County, 1992-2008*



Federal funding for vaccine purchases through the Vaccine for Children (VFC) Program and expansions of the Children's Health Insurance Program have also enabled many more private health care providers to offer immunizations to their patients without health insurance coverage. Over 50 percent of children receive their basic immunizations in a doctor's office, health center, or hospital outpatient clinic.

State and local health departments have urged health care providers to:

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[www.mahoning-health.org](http://www.mahoning-health.org)

- re-examine their immunization procedures by participating in programs like Maximize Office Based Immunizations (MOBI)
- identify and reduce "missed opportunities" to immunize children
- develop or improve their immunization recall and reminder systems which notify parents when their children's shot are due
- measure the effectiveness of their immunization practices by conducting periodic coverage assessments with quality assurance tools like Assessment, Feedback, Incentives, and Exchange (AFIX).

The development of the state immunization recall and tracking registry know as SIIS, which enables health care providers to access a child's shot record from a central repository, has helped providers to avoid missed opportunities to immunize children on-time. Local boards of health, hospitals, and community health centers are using the state registry and are encouraging all other immunization providers to include their patients' shot records in the registry so that public health officials can track progress toward on-time immunization for all 6,000 two-year olds in Mahoning County.

\* 4 doses of diphtheria, tetanus, and acellular pertussis (DTaP), 3 doses of polio vaccine, and 1 dose of measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine (MMR); other vaccines have been added to the basic series of recommended shots since this survey began but are not included in the results

*For more information about Ohio's child immunization registry, visit the registry website at*

<https://www.impactsiis.org/login.asp>.