



## Marquette County Health Department

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FRED J. BENZIE, M.P.H., M.P.A., R.S., HEALTH OFFICER



January 19, 2012

**Finance &  
Administrative  
Services**  
(906) 475-9977

**Personal Health  
(Clinic)**  
(906) 475-7844

**WIC Program**  
(906) 475-7846

**Environmental  
Health**  
(906) 475-4195

**Community  
Health**  
(906) 475-7848

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### MISSION

To serve people  
by providing  
leadership in  
assessing,  
promoting and  
assuring good  
health within  
our community.



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Dear Parents:

There have been three individuals recently diagnosed with pertussis (whooping cough), in Marquette County Schools, including Gwinn High School, Bothwell Middle School and Crossroads School. Pertussis is easily spread and outbreaks have been occurring in other parts of the U.P., over the past two years. Unfortunately, it can be up to three weeks between the time someone becomes infected with pertussis and the time they actually develop symptoms, so new cases may continue to arise locally over the coming weeks.

Pertussis usually begins with mild upper respiratory symptoms, such as runny nose and mild cough, with little or no fever. It then progresses to a more severe cough, with spasms of coughing which may cause vomiting. Some, but not all individuals, will actually make a whooping sound as they take a breath between coughing spasms. This is how pertussis came to be called “whooping cough.” Antibiotics are used to help decrease contagiousness in people with pertussis and can be used to help prevent infection in close contacts, but they do not “cure” the illness and symptoms may last for 6 to 10 weeks. Pertussis can cause particularly severe illness in infants.

Because of the current probable cases, I would like to remind you about steps you can take to protect your family:

- **Make sure everyone in your household is up to date on their pertussis vaccinations.**

In infancy and early childhood, most children receive a primary series of vaccines to prevent pertussis. These are typically given at 2, 4, 6 and 12-15 months of age, with a first booster dose at 4-6 years of age. Unfortunately, immunity from this primary series fades with time and a booster vaccine is now recommended for all children at 11 years of age or once for people over 11 years of age, who have not received this particular vaccine in the past.. The vaccine is called Tdap and is similar to the primary series of DTaP vaccines that children receive early on. Tdap is intended for older children and adults and protects against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis. After this one time boost with pertussis-containing vaccine, regular tetanus boosters are recommended every 10 years. Since the fall of 2010, Tdap boosters have been required for children entering 6<sup>th</sup> grade and for older children who are transferring between schools.

- **Take your child to the doctor if s/he has the symptoms described above.** Please do not send your child to school with a significant or prolonged cough, until they have been evaluated by a healthcare provider.
- **Call your healthcare provider or the health department at the number above, if you have questions or concerns.**

Sincerely,

*Terry Frankovich*

Teresa L. Frankovich, M.D., M.P.H.,

Medical Director, Marquette County Health Department