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**PRESS RELEASE – For Immediate Release**

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**Be Wise—Immunize! SCPHD Strongly Encourages Parents to Immunize Their Children**

TWIN FALLS—In perfect timing with National Immunization Month, the state announced that they will temporarily reinstate the funding for vaccines for all children, regardless of insurance status. Funding by the state will only be through January 2010. Due to state budgetary constraints, this funding had been restricted as of July 1; vaccines had been limited only to children meeting federal guidelines. With this development, South Central Public Health District (SCPHD) strongly encourages parents to take this opportunity to keep their children better protected with up-to-date immunizations in preparation for daycare, back-to-school, and college.

An appointment is required in order to streamline services and reduce waiting times. It is also critical to bring each child's immunization record to identify what they've had or still need. A limited supply of vaccines has already been purchased and will be administered and billed to Blue Cross of Idaho or Regence Blue Shield of Idaho insurance for families with coverage until this supply of vaccine is depleted. You can make an appointment by calling the SCPHD clinic in your area.

Immunizations have eliminated smallpox, polio, and diphtheria in the United States and have nearly eliminated measles, mumps, and tetanus. However, Idaho ranks the lowest in the nation for completed childhood immunizations. Each year vaccine preventable diseases, such as whooping cough, continue to be reported in many areas of the state.

Idaho saves children's immunization records in a registry called IRIS. Families can enroll their children in the free immunization registry at SCPHD or at their doctor's office. IRIS helps

families stay current on their children's needed immunizations and provides families with accurate records.

Appointments for immunizations at SCPHD offices are available in:

- Bellevue: 208-788-4335
- Burley: 208-678-8221
- Gooding: 208-934-4477
- Jerome: 208-324-8838
- Rupert: 208-436-7185
- Twin Falls: 208-737-5966

For more information on the importance of childhood immunizations, please call Cheryle Becker at SCPHD, 737-5936.

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