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### For Immediate Release

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**Contact: Cindy Bodendein RN, MSN**

Sauk County Health Department has seen an increase in pertussis cases in the Baraboo area. Pertussis (also called whooping cough) is a disease caused by a bacterium, which is spread from person to person and can cause serious illness in infants. Pertussis is a cough illness whose symptoms can range from mild to severe. It usually begins with cold like symptoms (runny nose, sneezing, dry cough). After two weeks of cold-like symptoms, the cough slowly gets worse. The next stage, which may last from 4–6 weeks, may be marked by coughing spells that are uncontrollable and may be followed by vomiting. Between spells, the person may appear to be well and usually there is no fever. These symptoms are common in infants and young children. Vaccinated children, teens and adults may have milder symptoms that can seem like bronchitis. Pertussis is most common among people who are unvaccinated, or who have lost the protection they got from childhood vaccines (immunity usually wanes by adolescence), and have not received a booster dose of vaccine.

The Sauk County Public Health Department urges all children who are ill, with these symptoms to remain home and to seek medical attention. There is antibiotic treatment if an individual becomes symptomatic with pertussis.

There is a vaccination that prevents pertussis, but infants under 6 months of age cannot be immunized. Children are protected through childhood vaccination received up to age 5.

Immunity usually wanes by adolescence so booster vaccinations are required for children and adults. The vaccine provides protection after 2-3 weeks so anyone recently exposed will not be immediately protected.

The Sauk County Health Department holds clinics monthly immunization clinics throughout Sauk County and vaccines are also available at the Health Department. Call the Health Department (355-3290) for further information or to schedule an appointment for vaccination.