

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
March 19, 2009

Media Contact: Julie Lloyd
202-728-0610, ext 3010

AMERICAN COLLEGE OF EMERGENCY PHYSICIANS SUPPORTS CDC'S LATEST RECOMMENDATIONS ON Tdap VACCINE FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Washington, DC — The American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) issued a statement today supporting the recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that emergency health care workers be vaccinated with Tdap to guard against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (more commonly known as whooping cough), and that all adults coming to the emergency department with serious wounds consider the Tdap vaccine.

Dr. Nick Jouriles, ACEP's president, said ACEP has issued both a policy statement and an information paper supporting the use of Tdap where there are no contraindications.

“Increasing rates of whooping cough in the general population make it even more important for emergency health care workers to be up to date on their Tdap vaccine,” said Dr. Jouriles. “It offers medical professionals protection but also prevents the spread of contagious disease to vulnerable patients who visit the emergency department.”

More than 25,000 cases of whooping cough are reported in the United States every year. It is highly contagious and rates of infection have risen dramatically since the 1980s.

The CDC recommends that health care personnel who work with vulnerable populations, such as those seen in emergency departments, be vaccinated with Tdap. It also recommends that women of childbearing age get a Tdap vaccine before becoming pregnant or immediately after giving birth. It further recommends that adults who come to the emergency department with wounds requiring tetanus immunization be given the Tdap vaccine.

“The next time you are due for a tetanus booster, you should get a Tdap vaccine,” said Dr. Jouriles. “This should be part of any medical worker's wellness regimen.”

ACEP is a national medical specialty society representing emergency medicine with nearly 27,000 members. ACEP is committed to advancing emergency care through continuing education, research and public education. Headquartered in Dallas, Texas, ACEP has 53 chapters representing each state, as well as Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. A Government Services Chapter represents emergency physicians employed by military branches and other government agencies.

###