



BOARD OF HEALTH

Kevin Blanshan, MPP
Mary Robinson, JD, MDiv
Robert Friedman, MD
Catherine Zeman, MS, PhD
Bonnie Sadler, BS

Nafissa Cisse Egbuonye, PhD, MPH
Public Health Director

Black Hawk County Board of Health Position Statement on Immunizations

Vaccinations are one of the most effective ways to reduce disease and improve population health and are considered to be one of the most important achievements in public health. Worldwide, immunization prevents an estimated 2.5 million deaths from vaccine-preventable illness. Local and state health departments play a crucial role in ensuring that immunization practices are effective and that vaccines are properly stored and delivered. Health departments also conduct disease surveillance and reporting, control disease outbreaks, help maintain immunization databases, and assure quality and accountability.

Still, 42,000 adults and 300 children die each year in the United States from vaccine-preventable illness. These illnesses are more likely to occur in geographical areas where there are pockets of unvaccinated or under-vaccinated populations. In order to achieve “herd immunity,” which helps prevent the spread of vaccine-preventable diseases, vaccination rates must be administered to at least 90% to 95% of the population, depending on the disease. Still, certain groups, such as newborns and those who are immunosuppressed, cannot receive vaccinations. The greater the herd immunity, the more these vulnerable populations are protected from vaccine-preventable illness. In addition, anyone who has not been immunized is also vulnerable to illness, and can also be responsible for the spread of illness. Public Health plays an important role in removing barriers to receiving vaccinations and in protecting the overall health of the community by ensuring that immunizations are available, regardless of the socioeconomic factors affecting a family or community.

The Black Hawk County Board of Health advocates for the protection of every individual and the community at large from vaccine-preventable illness by working toward 100% immunization rates.

Statement adopted: November 29, 2017