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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A Tradition of Community Spirit!

(Coldwater, MI) Making core values a reality – that's Coldwater's Meijers Pharmacy.

The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency recently recognized the pharmacy for its Free Antibiotic Program.

Steve Todd, Health Officer presented a certificate of recognition to Terri Hague, Meijer's Pharmacy Manager at the October 28th Board of Health meeting. Meijer's Pharmacy provided antibiotics to families exposed to pertussis.



Terri Hague, Pharmacy Manager and Steve Todd, Health Officer

In September, a Branch County elementary student tested positive for pertussis. Pertussis is also known as 'whooping cough'. Treatment protocols recommend children who are close contacts, who are not current with their shots or who are not immunized be placed on antibiotics. If children are not immunized for the vaccine preventable disease, they may also be excluded from school. Adults who are considered close contacts or who are not adequately immunized are also placed on antibiotics. Through the Meijer's Free Antibiotic Program, 18 people received free antibiotics.

According to Steve Todd, Health Officer, "The Meijer's Pharmacy free antibiotic program allowed us to quickly treat those exposed. When some of the medications first prescribed were not well-tolerated, Meijers worked with us. They easily made the changes needed. Their

willingness to assist demonstrates their community spirit. It also helped us stop this case of Pertussis from spreading.”

Pertussis is a highly contagious disease. It spreads from person to person through coughing and sneezing. It is called whooping cough because of the “whoop” sound people make when they try to breathe in during a severe coughing spell.

In 2008 and 2009, Michigan saw increases in its pertussis cases. As of the week ending October 30, 2010, Michigan reported 1,222 cases for 2010. During the past two years, the tri-county area has also reported a rise in the number of pertussis cases.

Immunization is the best way to prevent pertussis. Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency offers free shots to children who are on Medicaid, who are uninsured or who lack vaccine insurance coverage. To help parents get their children immunized, the health department holds immunization clinics once a week. Immunization clinics are scheduled in each county office as follows:

<u>Office</u>	<u>Week Day</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Call for an appointment</u>
Coldwater Office 570 N. Marshall Rd. Coldwater, MI 49036	Mondays	8 a.m. to 4 p.m.	517-279-9561, ext. 100
Hillsdale Office 20 Care Drive Hillsdale, MI 49242	Wednesdays	8 a.m. to 4 p.m.	517-437-7395, ext. 136
St. Joseph Office 20 Care Drive Hillsdale, MI 49242	Tuesdays	8 a.m. to 4 p.m.	269-279-2161, ext. 208

To find out more information about the health department’s immunization clinics or about pertussis, visit the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency’s website:

<http://www.bhsj.org>.