



**County of Moore  
Health Department  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Date: February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

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**Antibiotic Distribution Events Planned for West End Elementary Classrooms and Bus Routes Affected by Pertussis  
(Whooping Cough)**

Following further investigation of 5 confirmed cases of pertussis (whooping cough) infection in students at West End Elementary, Moore County Health Department officials were able to narrow the scope of the recent outbreak to two specific classrooms and bus routes at the school. On Monday, February 18<sup>th</sup>, a total of 185 surveys were distributed to parents and staff in the classrooms and bus routes that were affected. The survey queried the participants' interest in a mass antibiotic distribution event offered by the Health Department to treat the incidence of pertussis at the school. Of the 185 surveys distributed, 170 were returned and the results were as follows:

- **69% Yes – Would Be Interested in Participating**
- **15% No – Would Not Be Interested in Participating**
- **8% Have Already Been Treated**
- **8% No Response**

Based on the results of the survey, the Health Department will offer mass antibiotic distribution events for the particular students and staff who are affected on Thursday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, from 5-7PM and on Friday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> from 6-9AM. These distribution events are not open to the general public. They are available only to the affected students and staff of West End Elementary. Letters will be sent out to parents in the affected classrooms/bus routes on February 20<sup>th</sup> to inform them of the events. Parents will be required to accompany their child/children so that consent for treatment is signed. Each child will be weighed to ensure proper dosing of azithromycin, a CDC (Centers for Disease Control) recommend antimicrobial agent for the treatment of pertussis. Once all necessary information has been processed, parents will be able to pick up (on-site) an azithromycin prescription for their child/children at no cost to them.

During the events, information regarding pertussis, azithromycin, and pertussis vaccination will be provided. In addition, questions about how to take the antibiotic medication will be answered. A Spanish interpreter will also be available to assist as needed.

***"To Protect and Promote Health through Prevention and Control of Disease and Injury."***  
**<http://www.moorecountync.gov/health/>**

**Environmental Health  
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Fax: 910-947-5127**

**WIC  
Telephone: 910-947-3271  
Fax: 910-947-2460**

If a child or staff member had already received treatment during the outbreak period (past 6 weeks), it is not recommended that treatment be repeated. If a parent or staff member responded to the February 18<sup>th</sup> survey that they or their child had already been treated, they will not be dispensed medication during the events.

The Health Department acknowledges that this type of intervention will not “cure” the illness across the community. There remains a possibility that infection could reappear at West End Elementary or in other areas in the coming days and weeks. The goal of this type of mass antibiotic treatment is to end the recurrence of this particular incidence of pertussis. The Health Department will continue to monitor pertussis activity, provide education, promote vaccination, and respond accordingly should further intervention be needed.

At 98.5%, Moore County has a relatively high child vaccination rate. The vaccination given to prevent pertussis, Dtap/Tdap, initially works to protect against pertussis, but protection begins to lessen around a year after receiving it. This being the case, pertussis infections are seen throughout the state each year.

For more information regarding pertussis, please visit the Moore County Health Department website at [www.moorecountync.gov/health](http://www.moorecountync.gov/health). For continuous news and updates, follow the Health Department on Facebook (MOCO Health) and Twitter (@mocohealth).

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