

IMMUNIZATIONS (continued)

The Louisiana Office of Public Health operates the federal Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program which provides free vaccines for low-income children. This program should work effectively with private physicians and public clinics to make certain that children receive needed vaccines. A statewide advisory council of providers should be established to assure the effective operation of this program. Consideration should be given to expansion of the VFC program to provide vaccines for all children, regardless of family income.

Investments in vaccine programs provide significant cost benefit. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) notes that every dollar spent on immunization saves \$6.30 in direct medical costs and \$18.40 in total costs including missed work, disability and death.

Additional policy recommendations to maximize immunizations for children include:

- provide adequate reimbursement for Medicaid and private insurance administration of vaccines
- provide access to biomedical that prevent diseases such as respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), a common cause of viral death in children under 5 years of age, in Medicaid and private insurance
- monitor immunization records for school-age children and enforce the law that prevents them from attending school if they are not up-to-date
- embrace newly approved vaccines and assure that the Louisiana Office of Public Health incorporates them into the required schedule in a timely manner
- allow nurses to administer vaccines without a physician present in locations such as school-based health clinics
- expand the Nurse Family Partnership Program that works with high-risk mothers to assure that their children have needed immunizations

For additional information please go to www.lapartnership.org.



**For every \$1
spent on
immunizations,
\$24.70 is saved
in direct
medical costs
and indirect
costs**