



For Immediate Release

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## WIN Brings Immunization Advocate to West Virginia

**CHARLESTON, W.Va.** — The West Virginia Immunization Network (WIN) hosted *Every Child by Two* co-founder and Vice President Betty Bumpers at the Celebrating Connections Early Childhood Conference February 24. Ms. Bumpers spoke on the importance of childhood immunizations and immunization registries to teachers, early childhood administrators, therapists and other participants in the conference.

Bumpers is the wife of retired Arkansas Senator Dale Bumpers, who also served as governor of the state. Ms. Bumpers founded *Every Child by Two* with former First Lady of the United States Rosalyn Carter following the measles epidemic of 1989. Since that time, Bumpers and Carter have been credited with the passage of laws mandating vaccination at school entry, which now exists in every state. As a result of these laws, the United States has over a 95% immunization rate for school children.

“The West Virginia Immunization Network is honored to have such an influential leader speak about childhood immunizations,” WIN co-chair Patti Nelson said. “We’ve come a long way but there are still many kids at risk.”

Since 1993, childhood immunization rates have reached all-time highs with reported levels of disease at or near record lows in 1998. However, nationally about 900,000 children under age 2 still have not received all their immunizations.

“Parents may not be familiar with all the childhood diseases that can strike,” Nelson said. “All it takes is getting kids immunized to protect them.”

In addition to speaking to the Celebrating Connections conference, Bumpers toured the Kanawha/Charleston Health Department, met with First Lady Hovah Underwood and toured the Riverside High School Primary Care Clinic in Belle.

WIN is an organization of volunteers from the community, businesses, health care organizations and government agencies. WIN’s mission is to improve the health of all West Virginians by working cooperatively to prevent disease through increased immunization rates across the lifespan.

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