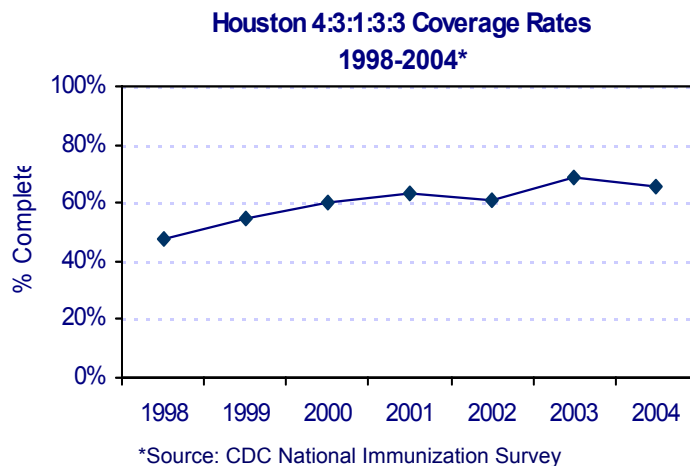


Childhood Immunizations in Houston/Harris County

The childhood immunization coverage level in Houston/Harris County is suboptimal. In 2004 CDC estimated that 65.5% of Houston children aged 19-35 months had received the 4:3:1:3:3 series of vaccines. The national estimate was 80.9%.



Pertussis is on the Rise

In 2004 there were 89 confirmed pertussis cases in Harris County, compared with 41 in 2003 and 52 in 2001. Thus far in 2005 there have been over 130 confirmed and/or probable cases in Harris County. While many of these cases occur among adults, children who are not vaccinated are at greatest risk for serious complications.

On an ongoing basis, **Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services** and the **Houston Department of Health and Human Services** conduct the following immunization-related activities within their respective jurisdictions:

- Surveillance for vaccine-preventable diseases
- Monitoring and analysis of area immunization rates
- Administration of the federal Vaccines for Children program
- Oversight and/or technical assistance for immunization registries
- Safety-net provision of vaccine in community-based preventive care clinics
- Education about the value of immunizations among key stakeholders
- Compliance audits of state immunization requirements among schools and child care facilities

However, ensuring adequate immunization coverage requires a multi-sector approach:

- **Private providers** must immunize on time, every time
- **Insurers** must make certain that participating providers are immunizing appropriately
- The **business community** must adopt health plans that cover childhood immunizations and have deliverable proof of coverage levels
- **Legislators** must advocate for laws that support childhood immunizations

This coordinated approach will ensure that the children of Houston and Harris County are better protected against vaccine-preventable diseases.