

**Mission:**

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



**Rick Scott**  
Governor

**John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS**  
State Surgeon General & Secretary

**Vision:** To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**Clearwater Pediatrician Honored as Florida's CDC Childhood Immunization Champion**

The *CDC Childhood Immunization Champion Award*, given jointly by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) and the [CDC Foundation](#), honors individuals in each state who go above and beyond to promote childhood immunizations in their communities.

Florida's Childhood Immunization Champion for 2015 is pediatrician Dr. Greg Savel from Myrtle Avenue Pediatrics in Clearwater. Dr. Savel is also the chairman of the Pinellas Immunizations Team for Community Health (PITCH), a group of community partners focused on increasing childhood immunization rates in the county.

Dr. Savel's nomination mentioned how his having witnessed three pediatric deaths from vaccine-preventable diseases during his residency at Tampa General was the spark that led him to his mission of educating parents on the importance of immunizations.

For the past 25 years, Dr. Savel has been an immunization leader in Pinellas County and an expert on addressing vaccine hesitancy among parents of infants and young children. He is the principal pediatrician on immunization within Pinellas County hospitals and speaks with patients and training staff regularly on various vaccine topics.

As PITCH's elected chairman, he has spearheaded collaboration with more than 40 community organizations and coalitions and has forged strong community partnerships to support vaccination of children 0-2 years of age.

Thanks to his advocacy, the vaccination rate for two-year-olds in the community has increased from 75 percent to 81.9 percent. (The vaccination rates for two-year-olds within the Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County is 99 percent and the rate for one-year-olds has just increased from 90 percent to 97 percent.)

Dr. Savel and the other 2015 Childhood Immunization Champions around the nation are being recognized during National Infant Immunization Week, April 18-25, 2015.

(more)

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For information about PITCH, go to its Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/PinellasImmy>.

For information about DOH-Pinellas, go to <http://pinellas.floridahealth.gov/>.

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