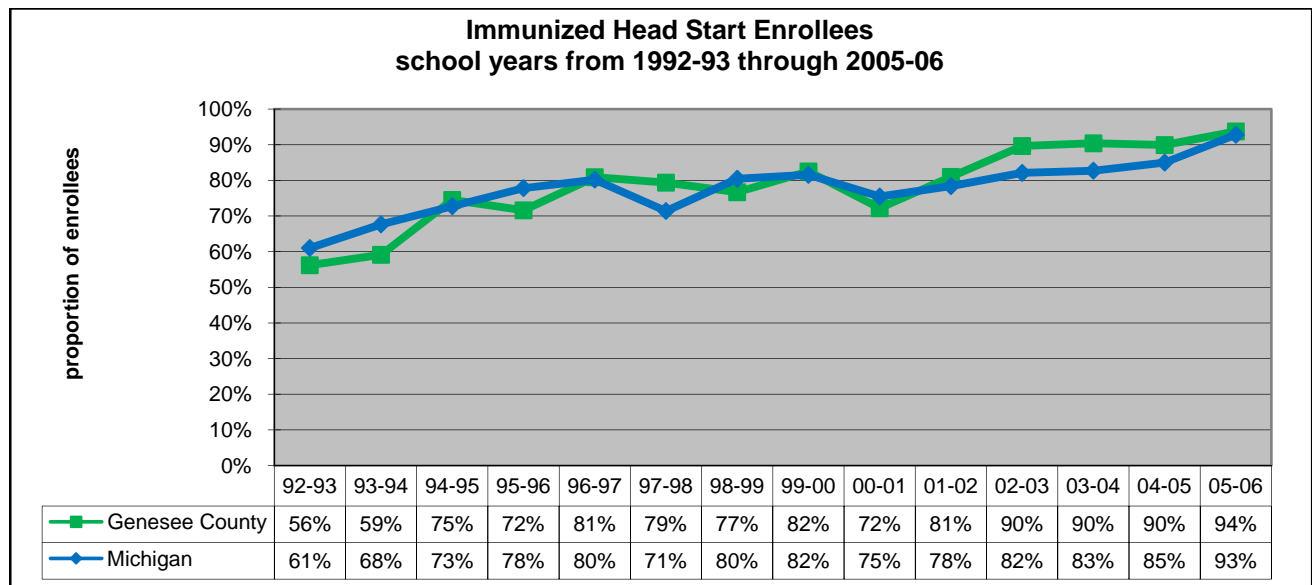
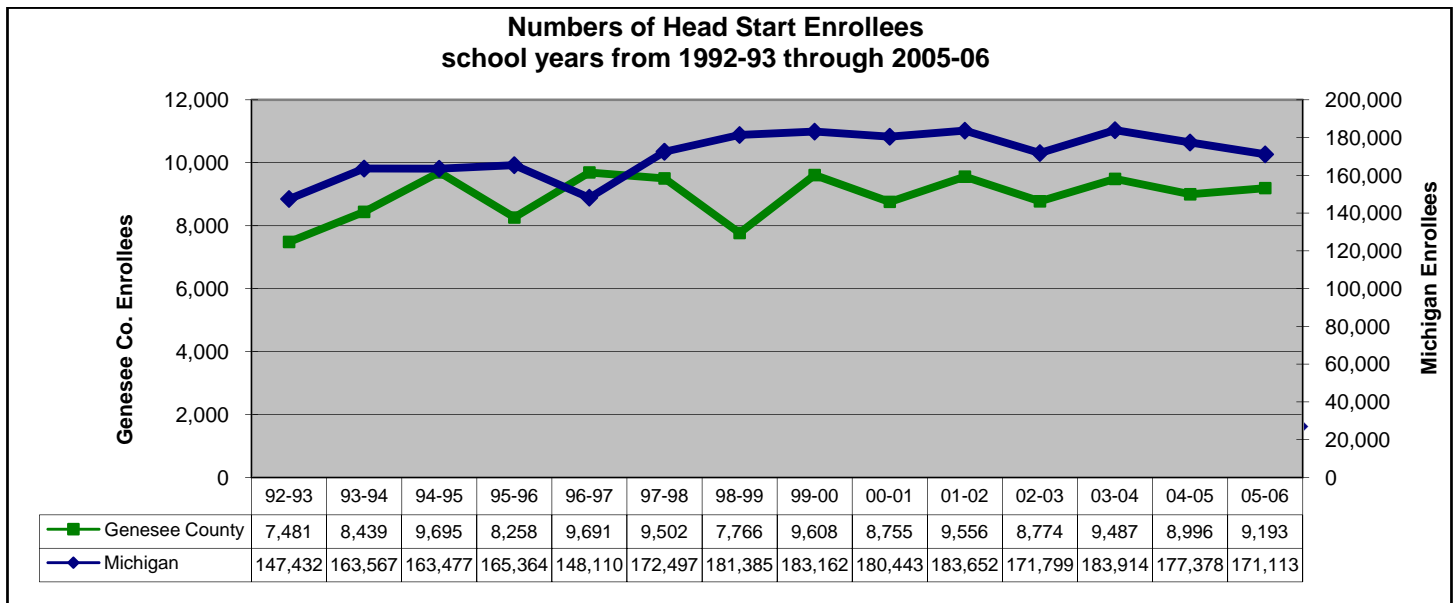




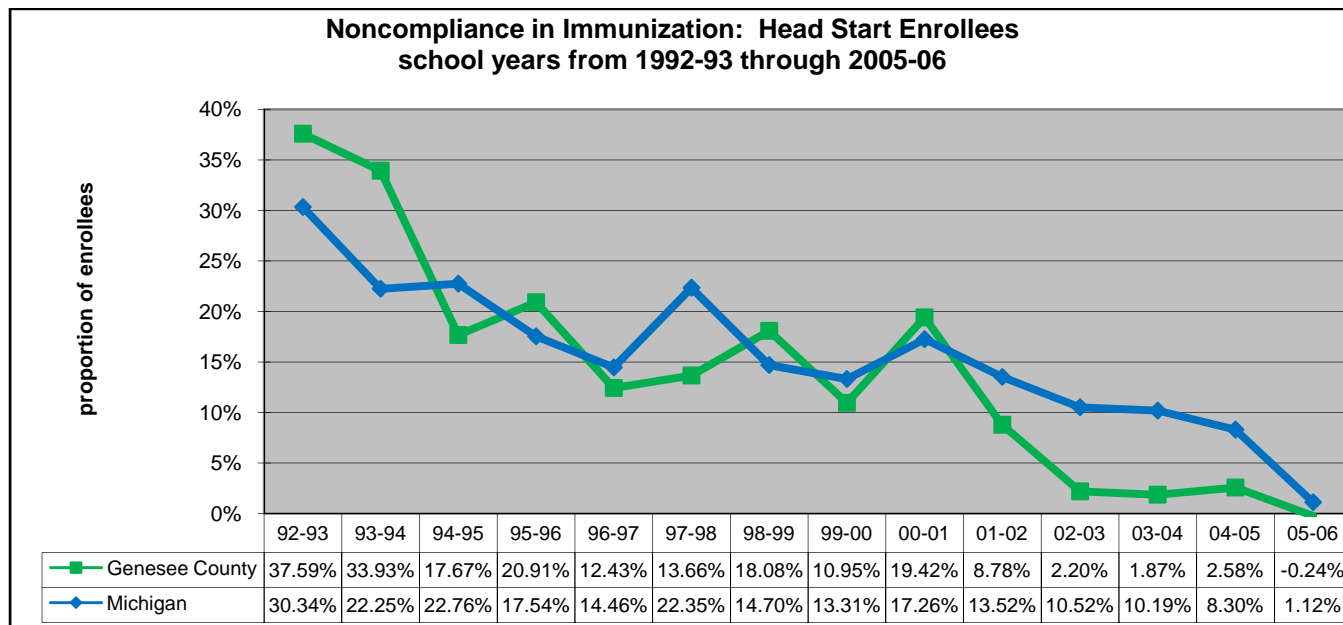
**Mission:** To improve the quality of life for children and families in Genesee County through assessment, awareness, advocacy and action.

## Fact Sheet 2.10 Head Start Immunizations

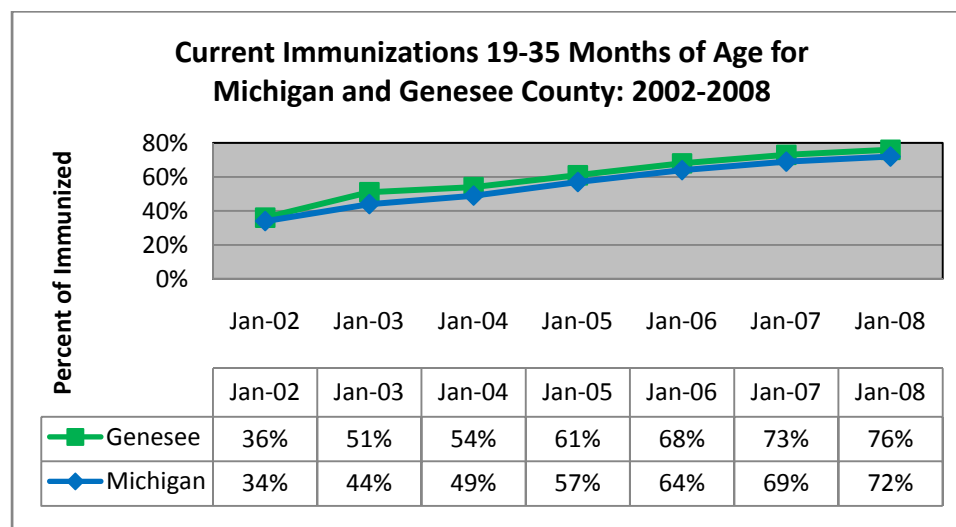
Head Start is a nation-wide program designed to enhance school readiness among preschool impoverished children. Although immunization is required by state law prior to school entry, waivers for this requirement can be granted for medical, religious, or other reasons. By far the most common reasons for granting a waiver are 'other' reasons. According to the Department of Community Health, 'other' reasons can include a personal (but not 'religious') belief, immunization was claimed but the records were lost, a sibling had a reaction (and the parent requested a waiver), etc.



**Fact Sheet 2.10: Head Start Immunizations continued...**



- Noncompliance with the immunization rules among Head Start enrollees has fallen sharply in both Michigan and Genesee County since the 1992-93 school year. The rate in Genesee County has fallen during this time from 37.5% to 0%. Compliance indicates all appropriate immunizations have been administered or a waiver has been obtained.
- Although waivers can be granted for cause, they are rare. In the 2005-06 school year, only 3.7% of all Michigan Head Start children granted waivers. (The proportion of Genesee County children receiving waivers was 3.1%).



**Continued...**

## **Fact Sheet 2.10: Head Start Immunizations continued...**

### **BEYOND THE NUMBERS**

The county and Head Start have done a great job of making people aware of the benefits of immunization. Continual, timely and accurate information to parents is needed. Alleged or suspected connections between immunization and autism or other health conditions/learning disabilities must be researched, and dispelled if appropriate. Parents need to know they are doing the right and best thing for their children in having them immunized.

### **EXAMPLES OF INTERVENTION EFFORTS**

Requirements for immunization prior to attending childcare, early childhood etc., school, should stay in place. Awareness campaigns related to free immunizations, assistance with finding affordable immunizations, where to go for them, and locating them in places people can easily reach, will help people comply with the need and/or requirement to immunize children. Local coalition efforts led by the Health Department demonstrated positive results.

**Source:** Michigan Department of Community Health, Immunization Division 3/6/07, Genesee County Health Department 7/2/08

**Notes:** See above

**Revised:** 12/12/08