



**For Immediate Release:**

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## **Game Developed at Tiltfactor Laboratory Helps Players Understand Infectious Disease Control**

*“Our game actually helps a player understand how a disease can spread from one place to another and how an outbreak might happen. As you play the game, you work with the other player(s) to stop the disease and death in the population. Players really experience how things get out of control very quickly with an unvaccinated population.” –Dr. Mary Flanagan, Founder and Director, Tiltfactor Laboratory*

*POX: Save the People*<sup>®</sup> is a game developed at Tiltfactor Laboratory in collaboration with the Mascoma Valley Health Initiative (<http://mvhi.org>) to help stop the spread of misinformation regarding the effects of vaccination.

*POX: Save the People*<sup>®</sup> is a 1-4 player game in which players fight the spread of a disease that threatens to take over a community. The game is based on the way a typical disease spreads, and players must work together to contain the spread of infection by either vaccinating or curing citizens. Research at Tiltfactor has found that players can apply concepts and systems-level understandings learned through playing POX to problems outside of the game.

Many public health groups need to better promote immunizations in order to continue to avoid vaccine-preventable diseases. Vaccinations against deadly diseases such as diphtheria, polio, and whooping cough were standard public health measures. But due to suspicions about vaccines and links to other diseases, more parents are refusing to immunize their children, and this could lead to a national health crisis. Parents mistakenly believe that vaccines aren't necessary any more, or that children develop immunity to these diseases automatically through time. These myths lead to disaster. Whooping cough is back; for example, the U.S. has lost what is called “herd immunity” to this disease as the percent of vaccinated people is lowering, allowing ways for contagion to spread among the populace.

The first edition of the game was officially released at the end of March 2011 and sold out within the first two months. Currently the second edition is available for purchase at <http://www.tiltfactor.org/POX>. A version for the iPad will be released by the end of 2011.

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