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Date: February 5, 2008

To: Public and Private School Principals

From: Daniel J. Hopfensperger, Director
Wisconsin Immunization Program

Subject: New Immunization Requirements for Students in Grades K5 (5 year old), 6, 9 and 12 Starting in the Fall of the 2008-2009 School Year

The purpose of this memo is to advise you that two new required immunizations have been added to the Student Immunization Law (Administrative Rule HFS 144) starting in the 2008-09 school year. The following questions and answers were developed to help implement this rule change.

1. What are the new vaccine requirements?

- One dose of **Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria and acellular pertussis) vaccine** will be required for students entering **grades 6, 9 and 12**.
- A second dose of **varicella (chickenpox) vaccine** will be required for students entering **grades K5 (5 year old), 6 and 12**.

The vaccine requirements will be phased-in until all intended grades are covered. The grade requirements advance two grades each year. For example, in the 2009-2010 school year students in grades K5, 1, 6, 7, 12 will need the second dose of varicella vaccine and students in grades 6, 7, 9, 10, and 12 will need Tdap vaccine.

2. What do schools need to do and what forms should be used?

For Kindergarten: Parents of children to be enrolled in kindergarten (K5) should be informed of all the vaccines required in addition to the 2 doses of varicella vaccine. The enclosed revised Age/Grade Requirements sheet (PPH 4021) and revised Student Immunization Record (DPH 4020) should be provided to them along with other school kindergarten round-up materials.

For Grades 6, 9, 12: In preparation for the fall semester, parents of students currently enrolled in grades 5, 8 and 11 should be informed of the requirements using the enclosed School Immunization Law Fact Sheet for Parents and the Student Immunization Record (DPH 4020). The Fact Sheet for Parents provides answers to common questions parents

may have about this new vaccine requirement and instructs them to report the dates their child received the required immunizations on the Student Immunization Record (DPH 4020). You may wish to customize the Fact Sheet for Parents by adding your letterhead, the date the information is due back at school, etc. The Fact Sheet for Parents can be downloaded from the Immunization Program Websites at <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/immunization/index.htm>. When the parent returns the Student Immunization Record to the school it should be attached or filed with that student's existing immunization record. Please make every effort to identify and notify students who will be affected by these new vaccine requirements.

3. Are the revised state forms listed in this letter available on line?

Yes, they can be found on our web site <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/immunization/index.htm>. The Student Immunization Record and Age/Grade Requirement sheet are in a PDF format and the Fact Sheet for Parents is a Word document.

4. Are there any exceptions to the Tdap or varicella requirement?

Yes, For Tdap vaccine, if a student received a tetanus-containing vaccine (eg. Td vaccine) within 5 years of entering the 6th, 9th or 12th grade that student is considered compliant and a Tdap booster dose is not required. The date of the Td vaccine should be provided on the Student Immunization Record in the space provided and returned to school. For Varicella vaccine, if a parent claims that their child had chickenpox, even after the 1st dose of varicella vaccine, that child is not required to receive varicella vaccine and is compliant with the law.

5. What if a student had pertussis disease?

Students who have had pertussis disease are still bound by the Tdap vaccine requirement because the duration of protection conferred by disease is unknown and because the diagnosis can be difficult to confirm.

6. Will the Fact Sheet for Parents, Age/Grade Requirement sheet and Student Immunization Record be translated into other languages?

Yes, we will have the forms translated into Spanish and Hmong and will post them on our website at <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/immunization/index.htm>. This will take several weeks.

7. Can the new vaccine requirements be waived?

These immunization requirements will be waived for children whose parents elect a religious or personal conviction waiver option on the Student Immunization Record form. A health waiver is also available and must be signed by a physician.

8. Should the Fact Sheet for Parents and the Student Immunization Record be sent to parents of students who previously claimed a waiver for a vaccine(s)?

Yes

9. Will physicians be alerted to the new requirements?

Yes, a notice announcing the new vaccine requirements will be mailed to physicians and clinics statewide.

10. Are there any other changes to the Student Immunization Law Administrative Rules that effect schools?

In addition, the Department updated ch. HFS 144 as follows:

1. Added language stating that the Department may temporarily suspend a vaccine requirement if the Department determines that there is a shortage of the vaccine because a student could not possibly obtain a required vaccine in such circumstances.
2. Revised the definition of “written evidence of immunization” to include electronic records because immunization registries used by many providers store immunization data that are accessible to schools electronically.
3. Changed the language regarding release of immunization information between vaccine providers and schools or day care centers, and among providers, from discretionary to mandatory to create a clear requirement for disclosure.

If you have any questions about these new immunization requirements, please contact the Immunization Program Advisor nearest you at the locations and phone numbers below:

Jane Dunbar (Rhineland) 715-365-2709	Jackie Kowalski (Milw) 414-227-4876
Cathy Edwards (Milw) 414-227-3995	Susan Nelson (Gr. Bay) 920-448-5231
Jim Zanto (Eau Claire) 715-836-2499	Vacant (Madison) 608-266-2346

Please share this memo with your school nurse, health aide(s) and other interested parties.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Enc Student Immunization Record
Age/Grade Requirements
School Immunization Law Fact Sheet for Parents

CC: Local Health Departments
Regional Immunization Advisors
Nursing Consultants