



March 6, 2009

Dear School Nurses/Providers:

On behalf of the Division of Immunizations (DOI), I would like to update you on the status of the new school immunization regulations. Although the regulations are in the process for approval, it is a lengthy process and may not be completed by the end of the 2008/2009 school year. While the Department was pursuing a 2009/2010 school year implementation, there may not be enough time for schools, health care providers and parents to ensure that children receive all required immunizations to be in compliance by the 2009/2010 school year. Therefore, it is the intent of the DOI to implement the new school immunization requirements in the 2010/2011 school year. Please use this extended time to prepare parents for the new school immunization proposals for the school year 2010/2011.

If the regulations are approved, the new requirements for the 2010/2011 school year will be as follows:

For attendance in all grades:

- **4 doses of tetanus***
(1 dose on or after the 4th birthday)
- **4 doses of diphtheria***
(1 dose on or after the 4th birthday)
- **3 doses of polio**
- **2 doses of measles****
- **2 doses of mumps****
- **1 dose of rubella (German measles)****
- **3 doses of hepatitis B**
- **2 doses of varicella (chickenpox) vaccine or history of disease**

*Usually given as DTP or DTaP or DT or Td

**Usually given as MMR

Immunizations must be appropriately spaced to be counted as valid. The regulations allow for a four-day grace period meaning a vaccine is valid if given within four-days prior to minimum age or interval spacing.

Students who have received at least one dose of a vaccine in an immunization series will be granted an eight month provisional enrollment if they have received at least one dose of each antigen in that series. The provisional enrollment begins with the first day of attendance or until the consecutive dose(s) are received.

New Additional Immunization Requirements for seventh grade students beginning school year 2010/2011:

- **1 dose of tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis (Tdap) (if 5 years have elapsed since last tetanus immunization)**
- **1 dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV)**

For attendance to school, seventh graders will need one dose of MCV and one dose of Tdap. Because these immunizations are not a series, there is no provisional enrollment period. If students do not have the required Tdap or MCV on the first day attending school, they should be excluded. (Ex: This means students entering school on day 1 or day 70 need these vaccines for attendance)

Exception to the Td immunization requirement:

Three doses of Td vaccine constitute a complete series. If a student, seven years and older, started the Td series late and received three doses, the student is considered up to date. The student would not have four doses of Td as required for school attendance and would only be eligible for Tdap if five years elapsed since the last Td. These students are considered to be up to date with no further documentation required.

Medical Exemption:

If a physician provides written documentation that the child is adequately immunized, (Ex: inappropriate intervals between Hepatitis B doses, MMR given 6 days prior to 12 months of age, any other spacing issues) it should be considered a medical exemption. In the event that there is a disease outbreak, the DOI may recommend exclusion or make other recommendations based on the disease outbreak and the immunization history.

The DOI will continue to communicate with you on the status of the new school immunization regulations through Penn Link, Department of Health's Immunization and School Health Nurse Consultants, the Department of Health's Division of School Health, and any other avenue available for communication with schools. Once approved, schools will be notified as soon as possible.

For further questions please contact the Department of Health's Immunization or School Health Nurse Consultants in your District. A listing of names and contact information for these consultants is attached.

For a copy of the proposed school immunization regulations please visit our website at: <http://www.dsf.health.state.pa.us/health/cwp/view.asp?a=178&q=242070>

Sincerely,



Heather Stafford, R.N., B.S.N.
Acting Bureau Director
Bureau of Communicable Diseases