

March 2014

Dear Health Care Provider:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you about a recent amendment to the Public Health Law (PHL), Rules and Regulations Subpart 66-1 addressing school immunization requirements. The amendment will take effect July 1, 2014. A detailed document with questions and answers regarding the changes to the regulations and their implementation will be posted at a future date on the Department of Health website at:

<http://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/immunization/schools/>.

Summary of Significant Changes to Immunization Requirements:

- For the immunizations required by PHL Section 2164, the number of doses of vaccine that are required will be determined by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).
- Serological evidence of immunity will only be accepted for measles, mumps, rubella, hepatitis B, varicella and poliomyelitis (all three serotypes).
- Diagnosis of disease will only be accepted as proof of immunity for varicella.
- For measles, mumps, rubella, hepatitis B, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, haemophilus influenzae type B and pneumococcal vaccinations, students will be assessed upon entry into, or attendance at, all appropriate grade levels.
- For poliomyelitis and varicella vaccination, students will be assessed upon entry into or attendance in kindergarten and grade six only. As the children enrolling in kindergarten and grade six move up a grade level each year, the children enrolling in those higher grades, or grade equivalent, must be appropriately immunized against poliomyelitis and varicella.
- “In process” is now defined as a child that has received at least the first dose of each required vaccine series and has age appropriate appointments to complete the series according to the ACIP catch-up schedule. If a child is obtaining serologic tests, the parent or guardian has a total of 30 days to provide test results and, if necessary (based on negative test results), appointment dates to begin or complete the vaccine series.
 - The ACIP catch-up schedule will be used to determine the appropriate intervals between doses of vaccines (<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/index.html>).
 - A school shall not refuse to admit a child based on immunization requirements, if that child is “in process.”
 - The 14 day grace period (which may be extended to 30 days for students from out of state) that schools may grant to students who have not yet furnished proof of immunity (as specified in section 66-1.3) remains the same as the previous regulations.

Medical Exemptions

- A medical exemption must be reissued annually.
- The exemption statement must contain sufficient information to identify a medical contraindication to a specific immunization and specify the length of time the immunization is medically contraindicated.
- A new medical exemption form has been developed for use and is available at <http://health.ny.gov/prevention/immunization/schools/>.

Immunization Information System Registries

All schools in New York State are able to access either the New York State Immunization Information System (NYSIIS) and/or the Citywide Immunization Registry (CIR). Public Health Law requires health care providers to keep patient immunization records up to date in NYSIIS and CIR. Keeping patient immunization records up to date will be helpful to provider offices because schools will be able to access NYSIIS directly for student immunization records. Schools may use NYSIIS and CIR to determine whether the vaccine doses required for school entrance and attendance were received at the appropriate ages and intervals, for all children in either system. If information is not found in NYSIIS or CIR, school staff will need to manually review paper vaccine records provided by your office(s) for adherence to school entry requirements.

If you have any questions regarding these changes to the regulations, please contact the New York State Department of Health Immunization Program at one of the following telephone numbers:

Central Office – Albany	(518) 473 – 4437
Capital District	(518) 473 – 4437
Western Regional Office	(716) 847 – 4503
Rochester Field Office	(585) 423 – 8097
Syracuse Regional Office	(315) 477 – 8164
New Rochelle Field Office	(914) 654 – 7149
Central Islip Office	(631) 851 – 3096
Monticello District Office	(845) 794 – 5627

In New York City, please contact the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Bureau of Immunization at (347) 396 – 2433.

Thank you for your assistance in ensuring that all children in New York State are appropriately immunized.

Sincerely,

Lynn Berger, M.D., M.P.H.
Director
Bureau of Immunization