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MEMORANDUM

To: District School Superintendents

From: Betty Coxe

Date: May 5, 2003

Subject: **KINDERGARTEN AND SEVENTH GRADE IMMUNIZATION VALIDATION ASSESSMENT, SCHOOL YEAR 2002-2003**

The Department of Health requested our office forward to all school districts the enclosed information on the Kindergarten and Seventh Grade Validation Assessment, School Year 2002-2003. Section 1003.22, Florida Statutes, requires each school district to refuse admittance or temporarily exclude from attendance any child who is not in compliance with the immunization requirements for school attendance. The Validation Assessment indicated 5.7 percent of seventh grade students and 1.4 percent of kindergarten students in randomly selected schools were in school without proper documentation. Schools must work closely with the county health departments to exclude and refer these students for needed immunizations or documentation before they return to school.

If you have any questions, please contact Frances Dennard, Chief, Bureau of Immunization, at (850) 245-4342 or Suncom 205-4342.

BC:mjbo

Enclosure

cc: School Health Education Contacts
School Health Services Contacts

BETTY COXE
Deputy Chancellor

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 2, 2003

TO: County Health Department Directors/Administrators

FROM: Bonita J. Sorensen, M.D., M.B.A.
Deputy State Health Officer

SUBJECT: Kindergarten and Seventh Grade Validation Assessment, School Year 2002-03

INFORMATION ONLY

In October of each year, all public and private schools are required to submit reports indicating the immunization status of their kindergarten and seventh grade students. This information is compiled and sent to the Bureau of Immunization for tabulation. The results are published in the annual Kindergarten and Seventh Grade Immunization Status Report, which was sent to county health departments by memorandum in January. In addition, a statewide kindergarten and seventh grade validation assessment is conducted annually by immunization field staff to validate the initial assessment and determine if any improvement in immunization levels occurred since the initial assessment. This report addresses the findings of the validation assessment.

Method:

The Bureau of Immunization randomly selected 56 elementary schools and 121 schools with seventh grade and audited 6,699 student records in kindergarten and 37,877 student records in seventh grade in both the public and private sectors. The findings of the validation assessment were compared with the status assessment conducted by the schools (Attachment 1).

Results:

- The validation assessment revealed that 96.6 percent of kindergarten students were appropriately immunized, a higher percentage than the 92.5 percent reported in the Kindergarten and Seventh Grade Status Report for all kindergarten students in Florida.

- The validation assessment revealed that 73.5 percent of seventh grade students were appropriately immunized; approximately 20 percent improvement over the 53.8 percent reported in the Kindergarten and Seventh Grade Status Report for all seventh grade students in Florida.

- The validation audit also showed 97 students (1.4 percent) in kindergarten and 2,144 students (5.7 percent) in seventh grade had inadequate documentation of immunizations.

- Attachment 1 has further comparisons.

- Vaccine-specific immunization levels and percent of proper documentation are shown in Attachment 2.

Concerns:

Section 1003.22, Florida Statutes, does not have a provision for students to attend school without proper documentation of immunizations. However, the validation assessment indicates 1.4 percent of kindergarten students and 5.7 percent of seventh graders are in school without proper documentation. County health departments should work closely with schools to exclude and refer these students for needed immunizations and/or documentation before they return to school. In most instances, compliance with the requirement is readily obtained when students are excluded from school.

The validation assessment shows that 7,766 students in seventh grade, 20.5 percent, and 107 students in kindergarten, 1.6 percent, have temporary medical exemptions and require follow-up. Please note that the 20.5 percent in temporary medical exemptions in seventh grade reflects the impact of the national shortage of tetanus-diphtheria (Td) vaccine. Specifically, 4,381 students, 56.4 percent of the temporary medical exemptions, are missing only the Td vaccine. The national shortage of Td vaccine has had a momentous impact on the workload—tracking students with extended temporary medical exemptions, concurrent updating of the electronic immunization data, and referral to the healthcare provider. County health departments are encouraged to work with public and private schools to ensure adequate follow-up or tracking methods are in place for students holding temporary medical exemptions.

In conclusion, enhanced focus on completion of the hepatitis B series and the other vaccines prior to entry into kindergarten and seventh grade is a must for parents, healthcare providers, school health staff, and county health departments to guarantee that students are adequately immunized and protected. County health departments are encouraged to work with local community partners to promote implementation of the *Standards for Pediatric Immunization Practices* and use of the latest Recommended Childhood Immunization Schedule approved by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Family Physicians, and by all health professionals who are involved in the immunization of children. If you have any questions, you may call Frances Dennard, Bureau of Immunization, at (850) 245-4342 or SunCom 205-4342.

BJS/cha/fhd
Attachments
cc: Mary Jo Butler, Department of Education
Lavan Dukes, Data Base Management, Department of Education
Martha Haynes, Management Information Services, Department of Education
Annie R. Neasman, R.N., M.S., Deputy Secretary for Health
Landis K. Crockett, M.D., M.P.H., Director, Division of Disease Control
Annette Phelps, A.R.N.P., M.S.N., Director, Division of Family Health Services
Shannon B. Lease, M.S., Director, Office of Performance Improvement
Charles H. Alexander, Chief, Bureau of Immunization
County Health Department Nursing Directors
Bureau of Immunization Field Staff