

**Mission:**

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



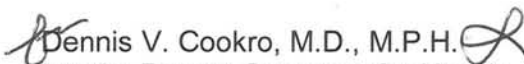
**Rick Scott**  
Governor

**John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS**  
State Surgeon General & Secretary

**Vision:** To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

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**INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** April 16, 2013  
**TO:** County Health Department Directors/Administrators  
**FROM:**  Dennis V. Cookro, M.D., M.P.H.  
Interim Deputy Secretary for Health  
**SUBJECT:** Kindergarten and Seventh Grade Validation Assessment  
School Year 2012-2013

**INFORMATION ONLY**

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Each October, all public and private schools submit reports indicating the immunization status of their kindergarten and/or seventh-grade students, as required by section 1003.22(8), *Florida Statutes*. County health departments (CHDs) and Department of Education (DOE) staff compile and submit this data to the Division of Disease Control and Health Protection Immunization Section (Immunization Section) for tabulation. It is then published as the annual *Kindergarten and Seventh Grade Immunization Status Report (Status Report)*. Because the data is self-reported, the Immunization Section field staff conducts an annual *Kindergarten and Seventh Grade Validation Assessment (Validation Assessment)* to evaluate accuracy of the *Status Report* results and to determine if improvement in immunization levels occurred. Below are the findings of the *Validation Assessment*.

**Method:**

The Immunization Section generated a "Membership by School by Grade" DOE report. Because public kindergartens made up 72% (or 2,003), and private kindergartens made up 28% (or 771), of all Florida kindergartens fitting sample selection criteria, the sample was pulled using this methodology.

Of the 120 kindergarten schools needed, this equated to 86 public and 34 private schools. The Immunization Section assigned each public school a number and generated a simple random sample of 86 numbers ranging from one to 2,003. The 86 schools selected became the kindergarten public school sample.

The Immunization Section then generated a "Total Enrollment by Grade Level" report from the DOE's "Florida Private Schools Directory" to obtain the 34 private schools needed. The Immunization Section assigned each private school a number and generated a simple random sample of 34 numbers ranging from one to 771. The 34 schools selected became the kindergarten private school sample.

Applying this same methodology, 120 seventh-grade schools were selected. This equated to 74 public and 46 private schools. Combining all kindergarten and seventh-grade public and private schools, field staff audited ten randomly selected immunization records per school, totaling 240 schools (or 2,400 immunization records). The results of this report reflect those 2,400 randomly selected records.

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### **Results:**

- 93.8% of kindergarten students were fully immunized, which is similar to the 92.1% reported in the *Status Report* for all kindergarten students in Florida (State & National goal: 95%).
- 90.6% of seventh-grade students were fully immunized, compared to 95.3% reported in the *Status Report* for all seventh-grade students in Florida (State goal: 95%; National goal: 90%).
- 19.3% of kindergarten students and 21.8% of seventh-grade students had improperly certified or no immunization record (DH Form 680, *Florida Certification of Immunization*) on file. These percentages are significantly higher than reported in the *Status Report*: 0.1% and 0.8%, respectively.

This difference is most likely due to the Immunization Section's request for private schools to categorize improperly certified students who are fully immunized as "Fully Immunized" on the DH Form 685 (*Kindergarten and Seventh Grade Annual Report of Compliance County Summary, Compulsory Immunization – Florida Statute 1003.22*) and for public schools to categorize these students as "Total Certificates of Immunization" for Survey 2. This was due in part to the substantial number of inappropriately issued Temporary Medical Exemptions (TMEs) to students who met school entry requirements.

Additionally, the *Status Report* does not capture students as "Improperly Certified or No Immunization Record." It captures students as "out of compliance," meaning not fully immunized or having no immunization documentation. A comparison of "out of compliance" kindergarten students would be 0.1% for the *Status Report* and 2.5% for the *Validation Assessment*. Seventh-grade would be 0.8% for the *Status Report* and 7.6% for the *Validation Assessment*.

### **Concerns:**

Section 1003.22, *Florida Statutes*, offers no provision for students to attend school without proper immunization documentation. However, 20.5% of the records audited were improperly documented or missing. This percent is due mostly to the following factors statewide:

- Immunization providers incorrectly certifying DH 680 Forms for kindergarten students who met kindergarten entry requirements, as Part B, Temporary Medical Exemptions (TME), expiring on or around seventh-grade entry; instead of as Part A, Code 1.
- Schools, in turn, reporting these students as Part B during compulsory immunization reporting each October. Reference bullet three, paragraph two from "Results" (above).
- Schools not having and/or effectively utilizing a reliable tracking method for incoming transfer students (from another county, state, or country) within 30 calendar days of school entry. This results in reporting as "30-Day Transfer Exemption" instead of "Out-Of-Compliance."
- Schools allowing non-transfer students entry without a valid DH 680 Form or Religious Exemption. These students should be referred to their healthcare provider or local CHD for immunization services, and excluded from school until compliance is met.

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If you have questions regarding the methodology of this assessment, please contact our survey and assessment consultant, Ms. Amy Wilson, at (850) 245-4342, extension 2395. All other questions related to this assessment should be directed to the Area (county specific) Immunization Section field staff (see enclosure).

DC/CHA/aw

Enclosures

cc: Monica Verra-Tirado, Ed.D., Chief  
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