

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

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 14, 2014

TO: County Health Department Directors/Administrators

FROM: Celeste Philip, M.D., M.P.H. 
Deputy Secretary for Health

SUBJECT: Kindergarten and Seventh Grade Validation Assessment School Year 2013-2014

INFORMATION ONLY

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 department (CHD) and Department of Education (DOE) staff compile and submit these data to the Division of Disease Control and Health Protection Immunization Section (Immunization Section) for tabulation. These are then published in the annual *Kindergarten and Seventh Grade Immunization Status Report (Status Report)*. Because the data are 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 ratio of Florida kindergartens fitting sample selection criteria was 77% public and 23% private. Based on this ratio, of the 120 schools selected as the statewide kindergarten sample, 92 were public and 28 were private. Both public and private schools were selected via simple, random sampling. The public kindergarten population was obtained from the DOE's Membership by School by Grade report; while the private kindergarten population was obtained from the DOE's Florida Private Schools Directory.

Utilizing this same methodology and resources, the ratio of the seventh grade sample was 67% public and 33% private. Of the 120 schools selected, 80 were public and 40 were private. 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.

Results:

- 93.7% of kindergarten students were fully immunized, which is similar to the 93.2% reported in the *Status Report* for all kindergarten students in Florida (State & National goal: 95%).

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- 93.0% of seventh-grade students were fully immunized, compared to 96.6% reported in the *Status Report* for all seventh-grade students in Florida (State goal: 95%; National goal: 90%).
- 5.1% of kindergarten students and 14.9% of seventh-grade students had improperly certified or no immunization record (DH 680 Form) on file. These percentages are significantly higher than reported in the *Status Report*: 0.1% and 0.2% respectively.

This difference is most likely due to the Immunization Section's request for private schools to categorize students who are fully immunized but improperly certified, as "Fully Immunized" on the DH 684 Form and for public schools to categorize this group of students as fully immunized by reporting them in the "Total Certificates of Immunization" category to DOE. A major reason for this request is the substantial number of inappropriately issued Temporary Medical Exemptions (TME) to students who meet school entry immunization 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 the proportion of students categorized as being "out of compliance" with vaccination requirements for kindergarten showed a discrepancy. Among kindergarten students 0.1% were reported out of compliance in the *Status Report* and 1.2% through the *Validation Assessment*. Among seventh-grade 0.2% were reported to be out of compliance in the *Status Report* and 5.3% in the *Validation Assessment*. One reason for the differences between results of the two reports is, again, the request by the Immunization Section for schools to report fully immunized children who have been certified incorrectly as "Fully immunized" in the *Status Report*.

Opportunities for Improvement:

Section 1003.22, *Florida Statutes*, offers no provision for students to attend school without proper immunization documentation. However, 10.0% of the records audited were improperly documented or missing. The documentation problems seen were due mostly to the following factors statewide:

- Immunization providers incorrectly certifying DH 680 Forms for kindergarten students who met kindergarten vaccination entry requirements, as Part B, Temporary Medical Exemptions (TME), expiring on or around seventh-grade entry; instead of as Part A, Code 1 (Complete).
- Schools are reporting the vaccination status of these students medically exempt (Part B), during compulsory immunization reporting each October. See bullet three, paragraph two from "Results" (above).
- Schools not having and/or effectively using a reliable tracking method for immunization records on 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 DH 681 Form. 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).

CP/CHA/aw
Enclosures

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