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MEMORANDUM

To: District School Superintendents

From: Betty Coxe

Date: January 30, 2003

Subject: **KINDERGARTEN AND SEVENTH GRADE
IMMUNIZATION STATUS REPORT 2002-2003**

Pursuant to section 1003.22, Florida Statutes, and Chapter 64D-3.011(3), Florida Administrative Code, the Department of Health (DOH) must collect annual reports from all public and private schools to certify compliance with the compulsory school immunization law. The Department of Education and the Department of Health continue to work collaboratively to provide technical assistance and support to school districts and local health departments regarding the implementation of these requirements.

Please find the enclosed Department of Health Kindergarten and Seventh Grade Immunization Status Report for 2002-2003. Please note that statewide, 92.5% of kindergarten students were reported as receiving all immunizations required for school entry and attendance. Only 53.8% of seventh grade students were reported as receiving all immunizations required for school attendance. Approximately 44% of the seventh grade students had temporary medical exemptions due to the national shortage of TD vaccine in 2002-03 school year. Now that there is an adequate supply of TD vaccine, the large number of temporary exemptions will need to be tracked, monitored, and the database updated as children receive the TD booster. You may wish to make copies of this report to disseminate regarding the results and concerns for follow-up activities with schools in your district.

BETTY COXE
Deputy Chancellor

Kindergarten and Seventh Grade Immunization
Status Report 2002-2003
January 30, 2003

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact the DOH Immunization Program Office at (850) 245-4342 or SunCom 205-4342.

Thank you for your assistance with this activity.

BC:dmo

Enclosure

cc: Student Service Directors
School Health Services Coordinators
MIS Directors
Student Data Base Contacts

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 3, 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 Immunization Status Report 2002–2003

INFORMATION ONLY

Each October, all public and private elementary schools and schools with a seventh grade are required to submit reports indicating the immunization status of kindergarten and seventh grade students. This information is compiled and sent to the Bureau of Immunization for tabulation. Attachments 1, 2, 3, and 4 are summaries of kindergarten data, and attachments 5, 6, 7, and 8 represent seventh grade data for the 2002–2003 school year. This information was submitted by 2,870 schools with 208,393 kindergarten students enrolled and 1,773 schools with 224,039 seventh grade students enrolled.

Purpose:

- To assist in elimination of diphtheria, hepatitis B, pertussis (whooping cough), polio, measles, mumps, rubella, tetanus, and varicella disease in Florida by increasing school children's immunization levels.
- To ensure the enforcement of section 1003.22 (previously 232.032), Florida Statutes, Florida School Immunization Law, and Chapter 64D-3, Florida Administrative Code, regarding immunization.
- To identify those counties needing assistance to improve the immunization levels in kindergarten and seventh grade to at least 95 percent.

Results – Kindergarten:

- Statewide, 92.5 percent of kindergarten students were reported as receiving all immunizations required for school entry/attendance: five doses of diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (DTaP) vaccine, four doses of polio vaccine, two doses of measles, and one dose of mumps, rubella vaccines (preferably as two MMR), three doses of hepatitis B, and one dose of varicella.
- Students with exemptions from immunization accounted for 7.4 percent of the total kindergarten population, as reflected in the following: religious exemptions totaled 661, or 0.3 percent; permanent medical exemptions totaled 441, or 0.2 percent; 30-day exemptions totaled 1,570, or 0.8 percent; and temporary medical exemptions totaled 12,715, or 6.1 percent. The national shortage of DTaP is reflected in the increase of temporary medical exemptions.

- Twenty-five of the 67 counties, or 37.3 percent, reported that 95 percent or more of public and private students had received all required immunizations.

Concerns – Kindergarten:

- The statewide coverage level decreased from 93.6 percent in the 2001–2002 school year to 92.5 percent in the 2002–2003 school year. Temporary medical exemptions (TMEs) accounted for 82.6 percent of all exemptions, while 30-day exemptions accounted for 10.2 percent. Children whose DTaP was deferred as a result of the shortage need to be tracked for completion.
- This year, 55 selected counties were allowed to submit their public kindergarten data electronically to the Department of Education. While most of these counties' electronic data remained within the acceptable range, several still had an excess of students in the temporary medical exemption, 30-day exemption, or out-of-compliance categories.
- Section 1003.22(10a), Florida Statutes, does not allow students without proper documentation to attend school; however, 11 counties reported a total of 159 students, or 0.1 percent, with inadequate documentation of immunizations. These schools are in violation of the law and these students should be excluded from school until adequate documentation is provided.

Results – Seventh Grade:

- Statewide, 53.8 percent of seventh grade students were reported as receiving all immunizations required for school attendance: completion of the hepatitis B series, a second dose of measles (preferably MMR), and a tetanus-diphtheria booster (Td).
- Students with exemptions from immunization accounted for 45.1 percent of the total seventh grade population, as reflected in the following: religious exemptions totaled 589, or 0.3 percent; permanent medical exemptions totaled 483, or 0.2 percent; 30-day exemptions totaled 942, or 0.4 percent; and temporary medical exemptions totaled 99,116, or 44.2 percent. The national shortage of Td vaccine continues to have an impact on the number of temporary exemptions in the 2002–2003 school year.

Concerns – Seventh Grade:

- Now that there is an adequate supply of Td vaccine, the large number of TMEs from both last year and this school year will need to be tracked, monitored, and the electronic database updated as children receive the Td booster.
- Section 1003.22(10a), Florida Statutes, does not allow students without proper documentation to attend school; however, 22 counties reported a total of 2,360 students, or 1.1 percent, with inadequate documentation of immunizations. These schools are in violation of the law and these students should be excluded from school until adequate documentation is provided.

County Health Department Directors/Administrators
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January 3, 2003

The number of temporary exemptions could be significantly reduced if all health care providers implemented the Recommended Childhood Immunization Schedule, United States, January–December 2002, approved by the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Academy of Family Physicians, and implemented clinical practices outlined in the *Standards for Pediatric Immunization Practices*. A copy of the schedule can be found on the CDC's Web site at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nip/recs/child-schedule.pdf>. We encourage county health departments to work with local community partners to promote implementation.

The school health nurse or authorized public or non-public school official is responsible for follow-up on children with temporary medical exemptions or 30-day exemptions to ensure that they complete the immunization series. In addition, cooperative efforts between the school health nurse and school administration to update the electronic immunization data will benefit both the health and education system. The hepatitis B series, which takes several months to complete, and the Td shortage account for the large number, or 44.2 percent, of temporary medical exemptions. Using a reminder recall system for subsequent vaccines in the series could facilitate completion of the hepatitis B series.

The strength of this program is a result of the cooperative effort by schools and county health departments to protect Florida's children from vaccine-preventable diseases. The Bureau of Immunization will continue to support this effort as we work together to eliminate the needless threat of vaccine-preventable diseases from our children's lives. 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, Program Director, Intervention and Prevention Services
Department of Education
Lavan Dukes, Data Base Management
Department of Education
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