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**INTERAGENCY MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** March 25, 2004

**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 2003-04

**ACTION  
REQUIRED:** INFORMATION ONLY

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In October of each year, all public and private schools submit reports on the immunization status of their kindergarten and seventh grade students, as required by Section 1003.22(8), Florida Statutes. County health departments and Department of Education staff compile and send this information to the Bureau of Immunization for tabulation. In March, the county health departments receive the results in the annual Kindergarten and Seventh Grade Immunization Status Report. The immunization field staff conduct an annual validation assessment of kindergarten and seventh grade students to evaluate the accuracy of the status report results and to 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 50 schools with a kindergarten and 120 schools with a seventh grade. The immunization field staff then audited 6,605 kindergarten student records and 35,829 seventh grade student records in both the public and private sectors. Attachment 1 depicts the comparison between the findings of the validation assessment and the status assessment conducted by the schools, as well as other comparisons. Attachment 2 shows vaccine-specific immunization levels and percent of proper documentation.

**Results:**

- The validation assessment revealed that 97.2 percent of kindergarten students were appropriately immunized, a higher percentage than the 94.4 percent reported in the Kindergarten and Seventh Grade Status Report for all kindergarten students in Florida.
- The validation assessment revealed that 85 percent of seventh grade students were appropriately immunized, which is a 12.4 percent improvement over the 75.6 percent reported in the Kindergarten and Seventh Grade Status Report for all seventh grade students in Florida.
- The validation audit also showed 1.7 percent of students in kindergarten and 4.3 percent of students in seventh grade had inadequate documentation of immunizations.

**Concerns:**

Section 1003.22, Florida Statutes, offers no provision for students to attend school without proper documentation of immunizations. However, the validation assessment reveals that 1.7 percent of kindergarten students and 4.3 percent of seventh grade students attend 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 10.5 percent of students in seventh grade, and nearly one percent of students in kindergarten, have temporary medical exemptions and require follow-up. County health departments should work with public and private schools to ensure that they maintain adequate follow-up or tracking methods for students holding temporary medical exemptions.

In conclusion, parents, healthcare providers, school health staff, and county health departments must prioritize completion of the hepatitis B series and the other vaccines prior to entry into kindergarten and seventh grade to guarantee adequate immunization and protection of students. County health departments should 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 involved in the immunization of children. If you have any questions, you may call Ms. Deanna Bishop, Bureau of Immunization, at (850) 245-4342 or SUNCOM 205-4342.

BJS/cha/dlb

Attachments

cc: Mary Jo Butler, Director of Intervention and Prevention Services Program  
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