

COLORADO DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION

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Robert K. Hammond Commissioner of Education

Keith Owen, Ph.D. Deputy Commissioner

August 20, 2013

Dear Superintendents and Principals:

The school year is starting up again and students are returning to the classroom. This is the time of year that the immunization status of every child should be reviewed and updated. Immunizations are an important part of keeping your students healthy and in school. Colorado's Immunization Law [25-4-902 Colorado Revised Statute (C.R.S.)] requires schools and child care providers to review and collect up-to-date immunization records for children and adolescents.

(1) Except as provided in section 25-4-903 C.R.S., **no child** shall attend any school in the state of Colorado on or after the dates specified in section 25-4-906 (4) C.R.S. unless he or she has presented the following to the appropriate school official:

(a) An up-to-date certificate of immunization from a licensed physician, a licensed advanced practice nurse, or authorized representative of the department of public health and environment or county, district, or municipal public health agency stating that the child has received immunization against communicable diseases as specified by the state board of health, based on recommendations of the advisory committee on immunization practices of the United States department of health and human services or the American academy of pediatrics;

Parents have 14 days after a notice of non-compliance has been given to get their child's immunizations up to date or demonstrate they have to have a plan to become current. Parents also have the option of exempting their child from immunizations for a Personal, Medical or Religious reason.

The Colorado School Survey of Kindergartners conducted in the 2012-2013 school year indicated that only 80.3% of all kindergarteners were fully compliant. This means that they received all required immunizations, took a medical, religious or personal exemption, or were in the process of being immunized. 19.7% of kindergarteners were not up to date and no reason was given. This puts not only your students at risk but also staff and families. During 2012, 1,505 cases of pertussis (whooping cough) were reported in Colorado, and this translates to hundreds of days lost from school and work. Be aware that the state and local health departments have the authority to quarantine any unimmunized student during an outbreak.

Schools do have the authority to suspend or expel any student who is non-compliant under 25-4-907 C.R.S. We encourage you to work with your school nurse or local health department to become 100% compliant with the immunization law. Your school nurse has information regarding the clinics in the community that can provide the needed vaccinations at low or no cost. We ask for your cooperation on this matter.

If you have any other questions, please contact me at 303.866.6779 or patrick_k@cde.state.co.us.

Sincerely,

Kathléen Patrick RN Assistant Director Health and Wellness Unit

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Rebecca F.⁴ Holmes Associate Commissioner Innovation, Choice and Engagement Division