

Letter from the Immunization Program to School Nurses

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To: New Hampshire School Nurses

From: New Hampshire Immunization Program Re: School Immunization Requirements

Date: April 29, 2020

The NH Immunization Program (NHIP) has received questions about school immunization requirements in light of the current coronavirus pandemic. The response to the pandemic has meant that many health care provider offices are consolidating services, providing more telemedicine services, and postponing face to face well child visits, which often include immunizations.

It is not clear what the situation will be by the start of the 2020-21 school year, but it seems likely that some students will not be up-to-date for all of the NH school immunization requirements when and if schools reopen in the fall, as a result of cancelled and postponed appointments.

For your awareness:

- 1) Health care providers are being encouraged to find ways *to continue to provide routine childhood immunizations*. In addition to developing safe strategies to provide routine immunizations, providers are also encouraged to use any in person visit as an opportunity to assess and provide recommended vaccines. Here is the current guidance, recently sent to providers, with a link on the school page of the NH Immunization Program website: <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/immunization/schools.htm>.
- 2) Current administrative rules already allow for conditional enrollment of students who have had a least one vaccine dose in a series and an appointment for the next dose. Therefore, even students who have fallen behind should be able to be conditionally enrolled when schools reopen. Students without at least 1 dose of each required vaccine should not be enrolled unless they have a valid exemption.

For these reasons, it is not expected that there will be any changes, or a need for changes, to the existing school immunization requirements. Of course, we will continue to monitor the rapidly changing situation over the coming weeks and months.

We look forward to our continued collaboration with NH school nurses to ensure that all students and their families are safe. Please contact us with any questions, comments, or suggestions at 603-271-4482 or at immunizations@dhhs.nh.gov.

Thank you for all you do today and every day!