



OAKLAND COUNTY EXECUTIVE L. BROOKS PATTERSON

HEALTH DIVISION

Kathleen Forzley, Manager

(248) 858-1280 | health@oakgov.com

February 6, 2015

Regarding: Immunization Rule Change

Dear Parent/Caregiver:

Since 1978, Michigan law has required children to be up-to-date with required immunizations **ON** or **BEFORE** the first day of school/childcare. A child who fails to meet this requirement will not be admitted to school/childcare. The following circumstances allow a required vaccine to be waived or delayed:

1. A valid medical contraindication exists, preventing the child from receiving the vaccine at this time. A medical waiver should be completed and signed by the child's physician and should state the contraindication, vaccine involved, and time period during which the child is prevented from receiving the vaccine.
2. The parents/caregivers have valid religious or philosophical beliefs which prevent receipt of a vaccination. Waivers should not be taken lightly. A child who is not fully vaccinated against vaccine-preventable diseases could be a risk to others and for contracting the disease.

On December 11, 2014, the administrative rule was passed by Michigan Department of Community Health requiring any parent/guardian wanting to waive vaccine/vaccines for nonmedical reasons to receive vaccine education from their local health department. **This rule applies to children entering childcare, kindergarten, and 7<sup>th</sup> grade or newly enrolled in the school district after January 1, 2015.**

Oakland County Health Division (OCHD) will provide this education for Oakland County residents and/or those students attending Oakland County childcare facilities and/or schools at no cost, but **appointments are required**. The 30-minute education session will include information on the risks of not receiving vaccines and the benefits of vaccination to the individual and the community. This will allow parents to make an educated, informed choice for their child.

Parents/guardians deciding to immunize their child will be able to do so after the education session at the OCHD clinic or their own doctor. If the parent/guardian still wants to waive one or more vaccines, OCHD staff will provide a certified waiver. The parents will be required to provide the certified waiver to their child's school.

Beginning March 1, 2015, you may schedule your appointment for Waiver Education online at [www.oakgov.com/health](http://www.oakgov.com/health). If you do not have internet access or have any questions about the education session, call the Nurse On Call at 1-800-848-5533. Appointments are limited and scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis. We look forward to working with you to keep you, your family, and your community healthy!

Very sincerely,

Kathy Forzley, RS, MPA  
Manager / Health Officer

## **Dear Parent/Guardian:**

### **Key Points Regarding Claiming a Nonmedical Waiver for Michigan Schools and Licensed Childcares**

Michigan recently modified the administrative rules that change how nonmedical waivers for immunizations will be processed for school/childcare programs. The new rule went into effect on January 1, 2015.

With Michigan having one of the highest waiver rates in the country, a proactive approach has been established to help inform everyone regarding the benefits of vaccinations and the risks of disease. Some counties in Michigan have waiver rates as high as 20.7%. This means that more than 20% of the students in those counties haven't gotten all their vaccines. Some school buildings have even higher waiver rates. The hope is that the new rule will help answer any questions/concerns one may have regarding immunizations.

#### **Key Points**

- The new rule applies to all children who are enrolled in a public or private:
  - Licensed childcare, preschool, and Head Start programs
  - Kindergarten, 7th grade, and any newly enrolled student into the school district
- The new rule does not take away your right to obtain a nonmedical waiver.
- Nonmedical waivers (religious or philosophical (other) objections) will need to be obtained from a county health department; the schools/childcare centers will not have them.
- Parents/Guardians must follow these steps when requesting a nonmedical waiver:
  - Contact your county health department for an appointment to speak with a health educator.
  - During the visit, there will be an opportunity to have a discussion about immunizations with the county health department staff.
  - If at the end of the visit, you request a nonmedical waiver for your child, you will receive a copy of the current, certified (stamped and signed) State of Michigan Nonmedical Waiver Form.
    - Schools/childcare centers will only accept the current, official State of Michigan form (Current date: January 1, 2015).
    - Forms cannot be altered in any way (such as crossing information out).
  - Take completed, certified waiver form to your child's school or childcare center.
- If your child has a medical reason (a true contraindication or precaution) for not receiving a vaccine, a physician must sign the State of Michigan Medical Contraindication form; this form is available at your doctor's office (not the county health department).
- Based on the public health code, a child without either an up-to-date immunization record, a certified nonmedical waiver form or a physician signed medical waiver form can be excluded from school/childcare.

For more information, please visit [www.michigan.gov/immunize](http://www.michigan.gov/immunize) > then click on *Local Health Departments* > then click on *Immunization Waiver Information*. There is a list of all the county health departments on this website, along with their addresses and phone numbers.

## **Information for Parents/Guardians**

### **New Michigan School and Licensed Childcare Immunization Rule for Claiming a Nonmedical Waiver for Immunizations**

In 2014, Michigan modified the administrative rules that changed how nonmedical waivers for immunizations will be processed for school and childcare programs. The new rule went into effect on January 1, 2015.

#### **Frequently Asked Questions:**

##### **Why is this rule change important?**

Michigan has one of the highest waiver rates in the country. Some counties in Michigan have waiver rates as high as 20.7%. This means that more than 20% of the students in those counties haven't gotten all their vaccines. Some school buildings have even higher waiver rates. This leaves communities vulnerable to diseases such as measles, chickenpox, and pertussis (whooping cough). Immunizations are one of the most effective ways to protect children from harmful diseases and even death.

##### **What has the new rule changed for parents/guardians?**

Parents/guardians who want to claim a nonmedical waiver will have an opportunity to have a discussion about immunizations with county health department staff and receive information on the benefits of vaccination and the risks of vaccine-preventable diseases. The new rule does not take away a parent's/guardian's right to obtain a nonmedical waiver.

##### **What is a nonmedical waiver?**

A nonmedical waiver is a parent's/guardian's written statement indicating their religious or philosophical (other) objections to a particular vaccination(s).

##### **Who does this new rule apply to?**

The new rule applies to all children who are enrolled in a public or private:

- Licensed childcare, preschool, and Head Start programs
- Kindergarten, 7th grade, and any newly enrolled student into the school district

##### **What does certified, nonmedical waiver mean?**

Certified, nonmedical waiver means that the official State of Michigan Immunization Waiver Form (current date: January 1, 2015) is used and the county health department stamp and signature of the authorizing agent (county health department staff) completing the immunization education with the parent/guardian is on the form.



### **Can a parent /guardian obtain a certified, nonmedical waiver form from the school, childcare center, or healthcare provider?**

No, the certified nonmedical waiver can only be obtained at a county health department.

### **How does a parent/guardian obtain a certified, nonmedical waiver?**

Parents/guardians will need to contact their county health department to receive immunization waiver education and to obtain a certified, current State of Michigan Immunization Waiver Form.

### **What if my child has a medical contraindication to a vaccine?**

This new rule does not change the existing process for medical contraindications for vaccination. If your child has a medical reason (a true contraindication or precaution) for not receiving a vaccine, a physician must sign the State of Michigan Medical Contraindication form, which is available at your doctor's office (not the county health department). This form must be completed and signed by a physician before it can be submitted to the school or childcare center.

### **What documentation will parents/guardians need to submit to their school or childcare center?**

1. Parents/guardians will need to submit documentation of one of these items to the school or childcare center:
  - A completed, certified State of Michigan Nonmedical Immunization Waiver form, or
  - A physician signed State of Michigan Medical Contraindication form, or
  - A complete immunization record

If a completed immunization record or a certified waiver form are not turned in, then the student can be excluded from school or childcare based on the public health code, unless the student is in a dose waiting (provisional) period. Dose waiting period means that the student still needs an immunization for school/childcare, but is not recommended to receive that dose at that time.

2. Waiver forms that are altered in any way (such as information on the form is crossed out) cannot be accepted by the schools/childcares.

### **Where can I find more information?**

For more information, please visit [www.michigan.gov/immunize](http://www.michigan.gov/immunize) > then click on *Local Health Departments* > then click on *Immunization Waiver Information*.

There is a list of all the county health departments on this website, along with their phone numbers and addresses.



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## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### Extended clinic hours for back-to-school vaccinations

Pontiac, Mich., Aug. 3, 2015 – Oakland County Health Division will hold extended clinic hours to vaccinate children in their Pontiac and Southfield locations, County Executive L. Brooks Patterson announced today.

"I urge parents to get their kids vaccinated before the back-to-school rush," Patterson said. "Vaccinating children with all the recommended vaccines is one of the most important things parents can do to protect their children and the community."

Health Division's extended clinic hours are:

#### **North Oakland Health Center**, 1200 N. Telegraph Road, Building 34 East, Pontiac

- Wednesday, Aug. 5, 2015, 8:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.
- Saturday, Aug. 15, 2015, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, Aug. 19, 2015, 8:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

#### **South Oakland Health Center**, 27725 Greenfield Road, Southfield

- Wednesday, Aug. 5, 2015, 8:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, Aug. 19, 2015, 8:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.
- Saturday, Aug. 29, 2015, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Vaccines protect against serious and potentially life-threatening diseases, including measles and whooping cough. Unvaccinated children are at an increased risk and can spread diseases to others in classrooms and the community – including babies too young to be fully vaccinated and those with weakened immune systems.



Due to an immunization rule change from the Michigan Department of Community Health, waivers exempting children from receiving immunizations can no longer be obtained from a school or childcare.

Non-Medical waivers based on religious or philosophical beliefs must first be certified at the Oakland County Health Division.

Parents/guardians of children who are unable to receive vaccinations due to medical reasons should consult their healthcare provider for a medical waiver form.

For more information, go to [www.oakgov.com/health](http://www.oakgov.com/health) or contact Nurse On Call (NOC) at 1-800-848-5533.



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