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January 26, 2016

TO: School Principals, Office Staff, Nurses, and Health Aides

FROM: Paul Leung, MPH
Immunization Program Manager, Contra Costa Public Health

SUBJECT: Senate Bill 277 and School Immunization Law, Recommended Actions

Dear Principals, Office Staff, Nurses, and Health Aides,

Thank you for all of your hard work.

As you may have heard, SB277 changes school immunization law in California. No new personal belief exemption (PBE) forms may be filed for students attending a public or private school in California.

The impact of SB277 on your school will depend on how many of your students have a PBE. Most children receive all the doctor-recommended, school-required vaccines and the number of students in Contra Costa County with a PBE is low. However, PBEs can cluster in certain schools (<http://cchealth.org/immunization/school-iz-levels.php>), making them more vulnerable to vaccine-preventable disease outbreaks.

PBE forms filed **before** January 1, 2016 are valid and will remain valid until the student enters the next checkpoint. The two grade school checkpoints are transitional kindergarten/kindergarten and 7th grade. This means valid PBE forms for students currently in transitional kindergarten or kindergarten through 6th grade will remain valid until the student completes 6th grade. Valid PBE forms for students currently in grades 7 through 12 are valid through 12th grade.

A PBE may be transferred between California schools, both within and across school districts. However, if the PBE documentation is lost, a student will need to meet current immunization requirements to attend school. PBE forms from other states or countries are not acceptable.

PBE forms currently on file should have been completed correctly and the child should be currently attending school or will attend school within 6 months of the health care provider or parent signature date. For example, a filed PBE form dated December 31, 2015 would be valid if the child starts school on or before July 1, 2016. If the child will not begin school by July 1, 2016, the PBE would not be valid.

The statement "within 6 months before entry" on filed PBE forms refers to the first day of school. It does not include registration, walk-through, or other administration events. In other words, a child who registers for kindergarten in Spring 2016 but does not start classroom instruction until after July 1, 2016 cannot be waived from school immunization requirements even if a PBE form was submitted in December 2015. A PBE date calculator is available: <http://www.shotsforschool.org/calculator/calculatorWidget.php>

To help protect your students and staff from serious, vaccine-preventable diseases, we encourage schools to:

- **Review** student immunization records. Records should indicate that all school-required immunizations have been met, or a valid PBE is on file, or a temporary/permanent medical exemption is on file, or the student is in the process of meeting requirements as a conditional entrant. Students who do not meet immunization requirements have 10 school days to provide the needed documentation but your school/district may set a shorter time period.



- **Notify** families of students who may be affected by the change in law (6th grade students with a PBE on file and those entering kindergarten/transitional kindergarten) that vaccines are needed before the first day of school.
- **Watch** an archived webinar for schools: <http://www.immunizeca.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Recording-New-School-Rules-Part-II.mp4>

For Schools with Kindergarten Students

Inform all parents at registration that their child entering kindergarten or transitional kindergarten will need to have received the following vaccines before the first day of school (<http://eziz.org/assets/docs/IMM-222School.pdf> or http://eziz.org/assets/docs/IMM-222S_School.pdf):

- 1 dose of Varicella (chickenpox) vaccine
- 2 doses of MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) vaccine
- 3 doses of Hepatitis B vaccine
- 4 doses of Polio vaccine (3 doses OK if one dose was given at 4 years of age or older)
- 5 doses of Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis (DTaP) vaccine (4 doses OK if one dose was given at 4 years of age or older).

For Schools with 6th Grade Students

Inform parents of 6th grade students with a PBE right away that their child will need to have received the following vaccines before the first day of 7th grade (<http://eziz.org/assets/docs/IMM-222School.pdf> or http://eziz.org/assets/docs/IMM-222S_School.pdf). A template notification letter for parents is available: <http://cchealth.org/immunization/#simpleContained2>

- 1 dose of Varicella (chickenpox) vaccine
- 2 doses of MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) vaccine
- 3 doses of Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis vaccine (DTaP) vaccine, including a **Tdap** booster at 7 years of age or older
- 4 doses of Polio vaccine (3 doses OK if one dose was given at 2 years of age or older)

For the best protection, doses in a vaccine series are given over time. In other words, doctors do not give all four doses of polio vaccine at once. However, different vaccines that are due can and should be given on the same day. For example, a child who has not received any of these vaccines could get a dose of Varicella, MMR, DTaP, and Polio vaccine in one appointment then return later when the other doses are due.

A child who has received all currently due vaccines and is not due for the next dose may be admitted conditionally. A conditional entrant's record should be reviewed every 30 days and the incomplete series should be finished within the conditional entry intervals (<http://eziz.org/assets/docs/IMM-231.pdf>).

Additional SB277 resources for schools and parents are available on the California Department of Public Health's Shots for School website: <http://www.shotsforschool.org/laws/sb277faq/>

Please visit our website: www.cchealth.org/immunization or contact the Contra Costa Public Health Immunization Program at (925) 313-6767 if you have any questions.

