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To: New Hampshire School Nurses and Child Care Directors
From: New Hampshire Immunization Program
Date: August 3, 2020

Three months ago, the NH Immunization Program (NHIP) responded to questions being received about school and child care immunization requirements in light of the coronavirus pandemic. The initial response to the pandemic meant that many health care provider offices consolidated services, postponed well child visits, and, in some cases, closed offices.

As a result, it is possible that some students missed routine vaccinations and may not be up-to-date for all of the NH school and childcare immunization requirements when schools and child care reopen.

While there was an initial significant drop in vaccine orders early in the pandemic, that trend has reversed. Health care providers were encouraged to find ways to continue to provide routine childhood immunizations and mostly have done so. Those offices that closed or consolidated have found new ways of providing preventative services, including vaccinations. In addition to developing safe strategies to provide immunizations, providers were and are encouraged to use any in person visit as an opportunity to assess for and provide recommended vaccines. And, for children who may have missed appointments in the spring, strategies for catch up vaccination are now being promoted.

Current NH 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 may have fallen behind should be able to be conditionally enrolled when schools and child care reopen. Students without at least 1 dose of each required vaccine should not be enrolled unless they have a valid exemption.

Therefore, as was true last spring, there will not be any changes, or a need for changes, to the existing school and child care immunization requirements at this time. Of course, we will continue to monitor the rapidly changing situation.

We look forward to our continued collaboration with NH school nurses and NH childcare providers and educators 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 immunization@dhhs.nh.gov.

Thank you for all you do today and every day!