

HUNTERDON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

PO Box 2900, Flemington, New Jersey 08822

Date: October 12, 2011

Page 1 of 2



INFORMATION: PRESCHOOL/CHILDCARE INFLUENZA VACCINE REQUIREMENT REMINDER

**To: Preschool/Childcare Facility Administrators, Healthcare Providers and
Local Boards of Health**

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PRESCHOOL/CHILDCARE INFLUENZA VACCINE REQUIREMENT REMINDER

As we approach the midst of flu season, please be advised that the seasonal influenza vaccine is the best and safest protection available against influenza. Please be advised that New Jersey mandates all children six months through 59 months of age attending any licensed child care center, or preschool facility on or after September 1, 2008, annually receive at least one dose of influenza vaccine between September 1 and December 31 of each year.

NJDHSS is fully enforcing the seasonal vaccine mandate for children six through 59 months of age in childcare, preschool, and Head Start programs to receive the seasonal flu vaccine by December 31st. There will be no grace period granted for unvaccinated children. Children who do not receive the vaccine by December 31st will be excluded until the end of flu season, which is March 31st in New Jersey, or until they receive at least one dose of influenza vaccine. An accommodation is made for a parent/guardian to submit the necessary written letter requesting a religious or medical exemption as specified in the each of the respective sections of the rule.

By law, the superintendent and education officials have the responsibility to exclude children. Local or regional health departments have the responsibility to audit vaccination records and the authority to assess fines.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact
the Health Department at
(908) 788-1351 or health@co.hunterdon.nj.us

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Page 2 of 2

In accordance with N.J.A.C. 8:57-4.24, each violation of the rules shall be subject to the penalty set forth at N.J.S.A. 26:1A-10, (sic) Violation of the Sanitary Code, "each violation of any provision of the State Sanitary Code shall constitute a separate offense and shall be punishable by a penalty of not less than \$50 nor more than \$1000. Each penalty shall be sued for and recover in a civil action in a court of competent jurisdiction.." and the N.J.A.C. 8:57-4.2 Proof of Immunization, "A principal, director or other person in charge of a school, preschool, or childcare facility shall not knowingly admit or retain a child whose parent has not submitted acceptable evidence of the child's immunization, according to the schedules specified in this subchapter."

Just for clarity, the penalty action is taken against the facility or school not the parent. However, the code requires that the child either not be admitted or be removed from school if they are unable to show proof of immunization as required by the Immunization of Pupils in School rules.

Staff of the health departments work collaboratively with the school nurses and/or administrative staff of each school district to monitor this and all other vaccination mandates that affect school children and their families. This team dynamic has worked very well in the past and it is expected that this year will be no exception.

If you have questions regarding the flu vaccine requirement, please visit the Immunization Requirements FAQs online at: http://nj.gov/health/cd/documents/vaccine_qa.pdf
All other questions, please contact the State Vaccine Preventable Disease Program at (609)826-4860.

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