



Department of Health and Social Services

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Proposed Changes to School Immunization Requirements

Regulation Changes

The Alaska Department of Education & Early Development proposes to adopt regulation changes in Title 4 of the Alaska Administrative Code, 4 AAC 06.055, Immunizations Required.

Specifically, the proposal:

- adds one new vaccine (varicella, or “chickenpox”) and expands the age-range for another immunization (pertussis, or “whooping cough”) required for entry into a state public school;
- updates the name of the public health section involved with the regulations from *communicable disease section* to *epidemiology section*; and
- adds a new section that allows up to 30 days of provisional enrollment for homeless students to provide proof of immunizations.

A copy of the proposed regulation changes is available at www.eed.state.ak.us/regs. Alternatively, persons may request a copy by contacting the Commissioner’s Office at the Department of Education & Early Development (contact information shown below), e-mailing Dorothy.Knuth@alaska.gov or by calling (907) 465-2802.

Written Comments

Individuals may present written comments relevant to the proposed regulation changes, including the potential costs to private persons of complying with the proposed changes, by submitting written comments to:

Commissioner’s Office
Department of Education & Early Development
Attn: Regulations Review
801 West Tenth Street, Suite 200
PO Box 110500, Juneau, Alaska 99811-0500

Comments also may be submitted via fax at (907) 465-4156, or via the Internet, at:
<http://www.eed.state.ak.us/regs/comment.html>.

Comments must be received no later than 4:00 p.m. on November 9, 2007.

Oral Comments

Oral comments may be submitted at a hearing to be held on December 7, 2007 in the Board Meeting Room at the Anchorage School District, 5530 East Northern Lights Blvd. The hearing is scheduled from 8:05 a.m. to 8:35 a.m., although the hearing time might be extended to accommodate those present before 7:55 a.m. who did not have an opportunity to comment.

Persons also may provide comments for the oral hearing from one of the following Legislative Information Offices:

Anchorage – 716 W 4th Ave., Suite 200
Barrow – 119 Bank Building
Bethel – 301 Willow Street
Fairbanks – 1292 Sadler Way, Suite 308
Juneau – Room 111 Terry Miller Building
Kenai – 145 Main Street Loop, Suite 217
Ketchikan – 50 Front Street, Suite 203
Kodiak – 112 Mill Bay Road
Kotzebue – 373 2nd Street, Pillautuq Centre
Mat-Su – 600 E Railroad Avenue
Nome – 103 Front Street
Sitka – 201 Katlian Street, Suite 200A

Persons with a disability who need special accommodation in order to participate in the hearing process should contact Dottie Knuth at 465-2802 or Dorothy.Knuth@alaska.gov. To ensure that any necessary accommodations can be provided, this notification should be made at least 10 days before the hearing.

At the end of the public comment period, the State Board of Education and Early Development will review the comments and will, without further notice, either adopt these or other provisions dealing with the same subject or decide to take no action on them. The language of the final regulations may be different from that of the proposed regulations.

Implementation

The proposed changes in the regulation name varicella and pertussis as diseases for which immunization is required. Additional implementation guidance will be issued at a later date, after the regulation is approved. The state plans to require two doses of varicella vaccine for children in selected grades (to be chosen at a later date). These requirements will be detailed in a subsequent *Epidemiology Bulletin*. The pertussis requirement would substitute tetanus-diphtheria-acellular pertussis (Tdap) vaccine for the tetanus-diphtheria (Td) booster that currently is required if ten years have elapsed since a student received his/her last tetanus-diphtheria containing vaccine. *If approved, these new vaccine requirements will become effective during the 2009–10 school year.*

Two supplementary *Bulletins* provide additional information about the importance of Tdap and varicella vaccines in Alaska.^{1,2}

1. Alaska Section of Epidemiology. Pertussis Prevention through Appropriate Use of Tdap Vaccine. Bulletin No. 31, October 24, 2007. Available at: http://www.epi.hss.state.ak.us/bulletins/docs/b2007_31.pdf
2. Alaska Section of Epidemiology. Prevention of Varicella Disease through Immunization. Bulletin No. 32, October 24, 2007. Available at: http://www.epi.hss.state.ak.us/bulletins/docs/b2007_32.pdf