

Steve Sisolak
Governor

Richard Whitley, MS
Director



DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Division of Public and Behavioral Health
Helping people. It's who we are and what we do.



Lisa Sherych
Administrator

Ihsan Azzam, Ph.D., M.D.
Chief Medical Officer

Date: June 25, 2020

To: Chief School Nurses and Site Administrators

Re: Maintaining Childhood and Adolescent Immunizations During COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic is rapidly changing and continues to affect communities across the United States. As Americans have worked to flatten the curve, and health care providers are adapting to using different strategies to slow the spread of disease, the nation has seen a concerning decrease in the number of children who are appropriately vaccinated. As the summer nears, the Nevada State Immunization Program (NSIP) encourages Nevada's healthcare providers and schools to prioritize immunizations for children entering kindergarten and 7th grade for the 2020-2021 school year. This will ensure children will continue to be protected against vaccine-preventable diseases during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Public health experts nationwide are concerned about downward immunization trends due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In April, Nevada WebIZ, the Statewide Immunization Information System, showed a 48% decrease in vaccines reported into the system compared to the number reported in April 2019. Immunizations protect public health and prevent disease in Nevada's communities. NSIP encourages trusted school professionals to communicate with parents and encourage them to contact their child's health care provider for information on the best way to get their child (ren) up-to-date on school required immunizations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

If school districts choose to implement an online model for the return to school for fall 2020, immunizations will still be required per NRS 392.435 and 394.192. NSIP encourages school districts to work with parents and the local healthcare community to ensure children are appropriately immunized. As a reminder, if a child is in the process of getting their required immunizations, the child may enter school conditionally. The child, however, must be fully immunized within 90 school days after the child was conditionally admitted.

As a reminder, back-to-school events will look different this year, if they happen at all (due to social distancing) and should not be modeled on those that have occurred in previous years. Please urge parents not to rely on back-to-school events happening this summer. Additionally, please encourage parents to schedule appointments with their child's health care provider for immunization visits as soon as possible, especially if they have fallen behind schedule. Per Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 392.435 and 394.192, if a parent or legal guardian fails to provide their child's immunization documentation, the student must be excluded from school and may not be admitted until the requirements for immunization have been met. NSIP and Nevada schools must work together as an immunization community to ensure children are protected against vaccine-preventable disease and ready to return to school.

We appreciate all you are doing to keep Nevada safe during these uncertain times. Thank you for your continued partnership.

For more information regarding the ACIP immunization schedule, please visit:
<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/index.html>.

For further information, please contact Shannon Bennett, NSIP Manager at sbennett@health.nv.gov or (775) 684-2225.

Sincerely,



Shannon Bennett
Program Manager



Pam Forest, M.D.
Quality Assurance Manager

Encl:

- 1) Updated Tdap Booster Recommendation
- 2) School Required Immunizations