



STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH

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March 29, 2016

We received requests from several school nurses asking that the Washington State Board of Health (Board) change its rule on Immunizations of Child Care and School Children Against Certain Vaccine-Preventable Diseases (Chapter 246-105 WAC) to require students to start immunizations before school entry. Thank you to those of you who took time to share your perspective and expertise regarding conditional status.

The Board discussed this issue during the March 9 meeting and decided not to change the rule at this time. Instead, the Board directed Board staff and the Department of Health (Department) to engage stakeholders to better clarify the issue, and discuss strategies to reduce the administrative burden to schools while decreasing the number of children who are out of compliance with school immunization requirements. Stakeholders will include school nurses and administrators, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Department of Early Learning, child care staff, parents, Department of Health staff, health care providers, and local health jurisdictions.

In addition to engaging a group of stakeholders to better clarify this issue, the Board and Department are committed to helping reduce the administrative burden involved in immunization compliance work for school staff. Current strategies to reduce the workload include making technology improvements to the Immunization Information System (IIS). The Department requested funding through the state legislature to develop an Immunization Validation Tool in the IIS and to roll out the IIS School Module. If funded, these improvements could alleviate some of the administrative burden on schools and also inform additional potential changes to the rule.

We will continue to keep you updated on these activities and we hope that you will stay engaged in this conversation as we work with you to ensure that students are protected against disease and stay healthy while learning in school.

Sincerely,

Michelle A. Davis
Executive Director