

To: Public and Private School Administrators
From: Kelly L. Moore, MD, MPH, Director, Tennessee Immunization Program
Date: December 13, 2017

Subject: **Update to 7th Grade Chickenpox (Varicella) Immunization Requirements**

Schools will no longer need to review the immunization records of current students in Tennessee schools going into 7th grade in 2018 to verify they have had 2 doses of vaccine against chickenpox (also called varicella vaccine). Students are still required to provide proof they have had a booster dose of tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis vaccine (known as Tdap) by 7th grade.

Tennessee changed its school requirement from one dose to two doses of varicella vaccine in 2009, following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations. At this time, all current students have already had to provide proof of two doses of varicella vaccine to enter school.

Two doses of varicella vaccine remain required for all new students enrolling in a Tennessee school for the first time at any grade, kindergarten through 12th grade.

The Department of Health is in the process of updating its rules and the state immunization registry (TennIIS) that generates school immunization certificates. In the meantime, this notice is to allow you to communicate this change for children moving up to 7th grade in 2018. Please share this information as needed.

Doctors *recommend* three vaccines for all pre-teens, beginning at age 11: the first meningitis vaccine (a second is needed at age 16), the HPV cancer vaccine (2 doses), and the Tdap booster (the one required for 7th grade). We also recommend an annual flu vaccine. If a child needs a Tdap booster, he or she can get all recommended vaccines at the same visit. Questions? Parents may ask a healthcare provider or visit any local health department.

If a child has TennCare or does not have insurance coverage for vaccines, that child can get all recommended vaccines through the Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program at minimal cost in all health department clinics and many private clinics that care for children. For more information about VFC or immunization requirements, visit us at <https://www.tn.gov/health/cedep/immunization-program.html> or www.tennesseeiis.gov.