

## **Information for Parents/Guardians**

### **New Michigan School and Licensed Childcare Immunization Rule for Claiming a Nonmedical Waiver for Immunizations**

In 2014, Michigan modified the administrative rules that changed how nonmedical waivers for immunizations will be processed for school and childcare programs. The new rule went into effect on January 1, 2015.

#### **Frequently Asked Questions:**

##### **Why is this rule change important?**

Michigan has one of the highest waiver rates in the country. Some counties in Michigan have waiver rates as high as 20.7%. This means that more than 20% of the students in those counties haven't gotten all their vaccines. Some school buildings have even higher waiver rates. This leaves communities vulnerable to diseases such as measles, chickenpox, and pertussis (whooping cough). Immunizations are one of the most effective ways to protect children from harmful diseases and even death.

##### **What has the new rule changed for parents/guardians?**

Parents/guardians who want to claim a nonmedical waiver will have an opportunity to have a discussion about immunizations with county health department staff and receive information on the benefits of vaccination and the risks of vaccine-preventable diseases. The new rule does not take away a parent's/guardian's right to obtain a nonmedical waiver.

##### **What is a nonmedical waiver?**

A nonmedical waiver is a parent's/guardian's written statement indicating their religious or philosophical (other) objections to a particular vaccination(s).

##### **Who does this new rule apply to?**

The new rule applies to all children who are enrolled in a public or private:

- Licensed childcare, preschool, and Head Start programs
- Kindergarten, 7th grade, and any newly enrolled student into the school district

##### **What does certified, nonmedical waiver mean?**

Certified, nonmedical waiver means that the official State of Michigan Immunization Waiver Form (current date: January 1, 2015) is used and the county health department stamp and signature of the authorizing agent (county health department staff) completing the immunization education with the parent/guardian is on the form.

## **Can a parent /guardian obtain a certified, nonmedical waiver form from the school, childcare center, or healthcare provider?**

No, the certified nonmedical waiver can only be obtained at a county health department.

## **How does a parent/guardian obtain a certified, nonmedical waiver?**

Parents/guardians will need to contact their county health department to receive immunization waiver education and to obtain a certified, current State of Michigan Immunization Waiver Form.

## **What if my child has a medical contraindication to a vaccine?**

This new rule does not change the existing process for medical contraindications for vaccination. If your child has a medical reason (a true contraindication or precaution) for not receiving a vaccine, a physician must sign the State of Michigan Medical Contraindication form, which is available at your doctor's office (not the county health department). This form must be completed and signed by a physician before it can be submitted to the school or childcare center.

## **What documentation will parents/guardians need to submit to their school or childcare center?**

1. Parents/guardians will need to submit documentation of one of these items to the school or childcare center:
  - A completed, certified State of Michigan Nonmedical Immunization Waiver form, or
  - A physician signed State of Michigan Medical Contraindication form, or
  - A complete immunization record

If a completed immunization record or a certified waiver form are not turned in, then the student can be excluded from school or childcare based on the public health code, unless the student is in a dose waiting (provisional) period. Dose waiting period means that the student still needs an immunization for school/childcare, but is not recommended to receive that dose at that time.

2. Waiver forms that are altered in any way (such as information on the form is crossed out) cannot be accepted by the schools/childcares.

## **Where can I find more information?**

For more information, please visit [www.michigan.gov/immunize](http://www.michigan.gov/immunize) > then click on *Local Health Departments* > then click on *Immunization Waiver Information*.

There is a list of all the county health departments on this website, along with their phone numbers and addresses.