

Advisory Committee on Medical Exemptions
Virtual Meeting October 18, 2023

Attendees:

Kathy Kudish, DVM; Department of Public Health Immunization Program Manager

Ricky Baltimore; Chief Legal Counsel House Democrats

Keisha Hewitt; Nurse Consultant State of Connecticut Office of Early Childhood

Lori Flaherty; Supervisor of Non-Public School Nurses West Hartford

Inci Yildirim M.D.; Yale School of Medicine

Rob Dudley M.D.; Pediatrician CHC of New Britain

Susan Amster, P.A.; Physician Assistant

Patricia Firmender, Epidemiologist; Department of Public Health Immunization Program

Jodi Terranova, DO, MPA; Deputy Commissioner Department of Public Health

Chlo-Anne Bobrowski; State of Connecticut Department of Education Division of School Health-absent

Meeting was called to order at 10:03 AM by Dr Inci Yildirim chair of the committee.

Kathy Kudish introduced Patricia Firmender of the Immunization Program to present data from the 2022-23 school immunization survey. The survey is conducted on an annual basis and all schools, both public & private in Connecticut, are required to complete the survey. The survey is self-reported by either school nurses or school nurse supervisors. All data is reported on students' immunization status as of October 1, 2022 and is collected through the RedCap software application.

The survey does have some limitations including that the data is self-reported which lends itself to potential data quality errors and the medical and religious exemption data is not broken out by individual vaccine type.

The survey data is published on the Immunization Program's open data portal which is publicly available: [School Immunization Survey Data | Connecticut Data](#)

For Kindergarten in the 2022-23 school year 510 of 650 schools had at least 30 students which was the threshold for reporting in the portal. Coverage for MMR vaccine is the standard that we use to measure how well students are doing in terms of compliance for school entry and the median for MMR for 2 doses was 98.5 % with a low of 61.5 % at one school. For religious exemptions we saw a large drop down from 2.1 % to 0.5% due to the enacting of Public Act 21-6 but there was one school that did report 130 religious exemptions. For medical exemptions the rate remained steady at 0.3 % with a high of 30 reported at one school.

Patricia also reported on data submitted through October 13th into the Immunization Program Medical Exemption Portal. Thus far 23 unique providers have submitted into the portal a total of 57 patients with one provider submitting 9 of those exemptions. MMR had the highest number of exemptions submitted into the portal.

Inci asked if there is an age breakdown available for the medical exemptions and the answer is yes there is. She also inquired how Kindergarten students could still claim a religious exemption if Public Act 21-6

did away with religious exemptions and the answer is these are most likely students who are repeating Kindergarten.

Susan asked if we are matching up who is submitting medical exemption data into the portal and medical exemption data from the school immunization survey to make sure the data is consistent? The Immunization Program is continuing to provide education to both school nurses and providers on the need to enter all medical exemptions in the portal and that only MDs, DOs, PAs, and APRNs can enter data into the portal.

Rob asked if subspecialists are required to report and have been reporting into the portal? Yes, they are required to, and several communications have been disseminated to all licensed MDs, DOs, PAs and APRNs in the state reminding them of this requirement.

Jody asked if we had a sense of the mismatch of how many reports, we are missing in the portal compared to what was reported in the school survey and the answer is not that many. We are still working on cleaning up that data and making sure that providers understand to enter all exemptions in the portal, and that they can then print out a copy to give to the parent for submission to the school nurse. She also asked if the 98.5% of Kindergartners who were up to date with their MMR vaccine included homeschoolers and it does not.

Susan asked about schools who don't require immunizations and Patricia answered that all schools licensed under the state department of education are required to have their students meet the immunization entry requirements.

Inci asked if there was a way to work with the provider who submitted the 9 medical exemptions? Yes, we can and at the spring 2024 meeting we can get into a deeper dive into the data that is in the portal.

Keisha asked if there were any changes planned to the flu requirement to include 5-year-olds since there is an upcoming change in pre-schools that will see more 5-year-olds in pre-school starting in the fall of 2024? There are no plans to change the flu requirement to include 5-year-olds at this time.

Kathy mentioned that ACME is responsible for submitting an annual report due January 1st to the Public Health Committee with an update on this year's activities.

The meeting adjourned at 10:43 AM

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for April 24, 2024 at 10:00 AM.

Minutes submitted by Mick Bolduc Connecticut Immunization Program