

Advisory Committee on Medical Exemptions
Virtual Meeting May 24, 2023

Attendees:

Kathy Kudish, DVM; Department of Public Health Immunization Program Manager
Ricky Baltimore; Chief Legal Counsel State Democrats
Keisha Hewitt; Nurse Consultant State of Connecticut Office of Early Childhood
Chlo-Anne Bobrowski; State of Connecticut Department of Education Division of School Health
Lori Flaherty; Supervisor of Non-Public School Nurses West Hartford
Inci Yildirim M.D.; Yale School of Medicine
Rob Dudley M.D.; Pediatrician

Susan Amster, P.A.; Physician Assistant-absent

Meeting was called to order at 10:02 AM by Dr Inci Yildirim the new chair of the committee. The committee welcomes new member Dr. Rob Dudley.

Kathy Kudish began the meeting by providing an update on DPH guidance to school nurses for unvaccinated and under-vaccinated students. A letter dated February 16, 2023 was sent out to all MDs, Dos, Pas, & APRNs in the state from DPH Commissioner Juthani with instructions on how to handle in process vaccinations for students in all grade levels. Students in Grades 1 through 12 who are behind in their immunizations must follow the CDC catch-up schedule following the minimum spacing interval between doses and complete any additional required immunizations no later than 30 days after the minimal interval time period has occurred. These students need to have their provider complete the "Healthcare Provider's Certification of In Process Required School Immunizations" form and submit it to their school nurse. Students who prior to April 28, 2021 were enrolled in a preschool/Pre-K program AND had a religious exemption on file prior to April 28, 2021 can use an alternative vaccine schedule but must have their provider submit to their school a completed "Healthcare Provider's Declaration of In Process Required School Immunization for PreK or Pre-school Students Subject to Religious Exemption Prior to April 28, 2021" form.

The letter also specified that providers must enter in any medical exemptions they have submitted since July 1, 2021 into a new DPH medical exemption portal. To date very few forms have been entered into the portal so the Immunization Program will be contacting school nurse supervisors to collect non-identifying information on which providers have submitted exemptions so the program can conduct outreach to those providers to remind them of the requirement to submit all medical exemption data into the portal. Preliminary data from the 2022 fall immunization survey shows that we are not seeing an increase in the number of medical exemptions submitted to school nurses for the Kindergarten population but we will have further data on this at our next meeting in October.

Dr. Yildirim asked what the trend data showed for medical exemptions over the past few years and the rate has been steady at 0.3%. Chlo-Anne Bobrowski asked how is it that the medical exemption forms are being submitted to the schools but not being submitted into the portal and the answer is that the medical exemption form was created before the portal was operational, so we are now asking providers to backfill the portal with those missing data.

Dr. Yildirim mentioned that she is seeing more instances of vaccine hesitancy in her practice with parents asking if their child can receive a medical exemption based on their sibling's medical history.

This could manifest itself in more medical exemptions showing up in our school survey and state registry.

Ricky Baltimore asked if we will be able to monitor if certain doctors are submitting more medical exemptions into the portal than others. The answer is that currently we cannot, but we should be able to in the future. Right now, it appears that the rates for Kindergarten students do not have higher rates of medical exemptions than from past years but we will have more data on this at our next meeting.

We also had a discussion on practices who only administer one vaccine per visit/one vaccine every 30 days and if anything can be done to persuade or educate these practices either on the state level through peer to peer discussions or on a nation level with the help of the AAP.

The meeting adjourned at 10:36 AM

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for October 11, 2023 at 10:00 AM.
Minutes submitted by Mick Bolduc Connecticut Immunization Program