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TIMOTHY K. WEBB, Ed.D.
COMMISSIONER

MEMORANDUM

TO: Director of Schools

FROM: Robert W. Greene
Deputy Commissioner

DATE: February 5, 2010

SUBJECT: NEW STATE IMMUNIZATION RULES AND CERTIFICATE

The Tennessee Department of Health (TDOH) has issued new immunization rules and is issuing a new Official Certificate that is required for entry into school effective July 1, 2010. All newly required vaccines are routinely recommended for all children: most children should have already received them. Detailed information is attached to this communication. To summarize:

- There will now be only **one** official TDOH certificate of immunization that must be filled out by medical providers for parents to deliver to schools prior to entry of their child into pre-school, pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, 7th grade, or as a new student. The form is only available from a private healthcare provider or local health department.
- Medical providers will not be able to download the new official certificate from the TWIS website until April 1. If they do not have access to TWIS, medical providers will be able to order official forms from TDOH.
- For children entering **pre-school** and **pre-Kindergarten**, **four** new additional immunizations are required. All new requirements are routinely recommended immunizations most children are already receiving from their medical provider (see attached summary for list of required immunizations).
- For children entering **kindergarten** additional doses of existing vaccines are now required, and one new vaccine will be required beginning in 2011 (see attached summary for list of required immunizations).
- **Children entering the 7th grade, who are already enrolled, no longer are required to show proof of hepatitis B vaccine, but must show proof of two new immunizations.** For 7th graders, already enrolled in Tennessee

schools, only proof of the two new immunizations is required on the new immunization certificate. It is not necessary to copy the information from the previous immunization certificate on the new certificate (they may be stapled together for convenience).

- Schools will be given a three month grace period to meet the July 1 requirement. All schools should have the new, up to date student immunization certificates by October 1, 2010.
- Please share this information with all of your school nurses, CSH Coordinator, and other staff who assist in the registration process.
- As soon as possible, alert parents of new kindergartners, they do not need to bring the current immunization certificate to registration if school registration takes place prior to July 1. Rather, they need to have their child's medical provider or health department fill out the new immunization certificate after it becomes available April 1 and then bring the certificate to school prior to the start of school.

I know with any change in school policy, communication, and coordination challenges might arise. To try to avoid these challenges, I suggest you enlist the support of your CSH Coordinator to formulate a communication plan for both staff and parents in order to implement the new immunization rules. Communication strategies might include providing parents of entering pre-kindergartners and kindergartners a letter at pre-registration of the new immunization requirements and new certificate form, and providing parents, of all rising seventh graders, a notice of these new requirements in the end of year report cards.

To assist school systems with the new immunization requirements, we plan to provide several webinars to better inform school personnel of the changes.

If you need assistance, please contact Sara Smith, CSH State Coordinator, at sara.smith@tn.gov or 615-253-4664.