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TO: California Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program Providers

FROM: John Talarico, D.O., M.P.H., Chief
Immunization Branch

SUBJECT: Tdap¹ Requirement for All Students Entering 7th Through 12th Grades in
2011-2012 School Year:

- 1) Recall and immunize patients with Tdap now
- 2) Provide clear documentation about Tdap for Schools
- 3) Ensure your clinic has adequate Tdap supplies

ONGOING THREAT OF PERTUSSIS

Over 8,000 cases of pertussis, the most in over 60 years, were reported in California during 2010, including ten infants who died and hundreds more who were hospitalized. People of any age with pertussis may have coughing attacks that can last for months. Infants are most vulnerable, catching pertussis from siblings, parents and other close contacts. Because immunity from both pertussis disease and vaccines wears off over time, booster immunization with Tdap¹ vaccine is recommended for adolescents and adults to maintain protection.

NEW Tdap SCHOOL REQUIREMENT

A new school immunization requirement was recently signed into California law. All students entering 7th through 12th grades will need proof of a Tdap booster shot before starting the 2011-2012 school year. (In later school years, only students entering the 7th grade will need proof of a Tdap booster before starting school.) The new Tdap requirement applies to all public and private schools².

The recommendation by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) for a dose of Tdap for all youth ages 10 years and older will fulfill the new school entry requirement. (While not routine, a dose of Tdap given between the 7th and 10th birthday will also meet the school entry requirement, but the students may not be fully protected

1 Tdap = Tetanus toxoid, reduced diphtheria toxoid and acellular pertussis vaccine

2 Exemptions permitted for verified medical conditions or personal beliefs.

through the end of high school.) Adolescents who have received only the Td booster vaccine will not meet the new pertussis immunization requirement.

ENSURE YOUR ADOLESCENT PATIENTS ARE READY FOR SCHOOL THIS FALL

Protect your patients against the ongoing threat of pertussis and avoid frantic last-minute visits when school starts through planning and immunizing with Tdap NOW!

1. Send reminders and recall notices NOW to your patients who have not yet received a Tdap booster, including those who have received a dose of Td but not Tdap. CDPH has resources for providers at www.shotsforschool.org (phone scripts, letter templates, etc.).
2. Immunize at every opportunity, including sports physicals and visits for mild illness or injury.
3. Catch-up with other recommended preventive adolescent care, including the following vaccines: meningococcal conjugate, HPV, influenza, and catch-up vaccines (e.g., 2nd dose of varicella or MMR, 3 doses of hepatitis B).
4. Order enough Tdap vaccine to immunize your patients affected by the law and ensure that you have adequate storage for any increase in Tdap orders.

DOCUMENT Tdap DOSES CLEARLY FOR SCHOOLS

Tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis vaccines have similar names and abbreviations (e.g., Tdap, Td, DTaP, DT, etc.) which can be confusing to the school staff who will be keeping records for the new law. Be sure to document Tdap and related immunizations clearly and accurately in the patient's medical record and yellow immunization card.

This will prevent urgent calls to you from parents or schools asking for a record of Tdap administration so the student can attend school. Documentation should include the student's name, birthdate, date of immunization, name of vaccine ("Tdap"), and name of the immunizing physician or clinic.

The California Immunization Registry (CAIR) documents the information required by schools for the new law in the standard school format. If you are a CAIR user, consider printing out the School Immunization Record (Blue Card) for your patients to take to their schools. If you wish to become a CAIR user, please contact the CAIR Help Desk at 1-800-578-7889.

Alternately, the American Academy of Pediatrics, District IX and the California Academy of Family Physicians have sponsored brief, fillable, optional forms for providers to clearly document Tdap immunizations or rare medical exemptions (contraindications) for schools. These forms are available at <http://eziz.org/pages/vfc-forms-tdap.html#> (enter your VFC PIN and Zip Code for access) or through the sponsors.

UPCOMING WEBCAST

A free, live, CME webcast focusing on what you need to know about the new law (AB354) will be held on Tuesday, February 15, 2011 12:00 - 1:00 PM: [Shots for School: Clinicians' Role In California's New Tdap Requirement for 7th -12th Graders](http://shotsforschool.org/webinar/register/), hosted by CDPH and University of California Television (UC-TV). See <http://shotsforschool.org/webinar/register/> for information on registration and CME. The presentation will also be archived for later viewing.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

New Tdap School Requirement: www.shotsforschool.org

Pertussis Disease and Immunization:

www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/Pertussis.aspx

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