

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Key Points Regarding Claiming a Nonmedical Waiver for Michigan Schools and Licensed Childcares

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

With Michigan having one of the highest waiver rates in the country, a proactive approach has been established to help inform everyone regarding the benefits of vaccinations and the risks of disease. 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. The hope is that the new rule will help answer any questions/concerns one may have regarding immunizations.

Key Points

- 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
- The new rule does not take away your right to obtain a nonmedical waiver.
- Nonmedical waivers (religious or philosophical (other) objections) will need to be obtained from a county health department; the schools/childcare centers will not have them.
- Parents/Guardians must follow these steps when requesting a nonmedical waiver:
 - Contact your county health department for an appointment to speak with a health educator.
 - During the visit, there will be an opportunity to have a discussion about immunizations with the county health department staff.
 - If at the end of the visit, you request a nonmedical waiver for your child, you will receive a copy of the current, certified (stamped and signed) State of Michigan Nonmedical Waiver Form.
 - Schools/childcare centers will only accept the current, official State of Michigan form (Current date: January 1, 2015).
 - Forms cannot be altered in any way (such as crossing information out).
 - Take completed, certified waiver form to your child's school or childcare center.
- 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; this form is available at your doctor's office (not the county health department).
- Based on the public health code, a child without either an up-to-date immunization record, a certified nonmedical waiver form or a physician signed medical waiver form can be excluded from school/childcare.

For more information, please visit 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 addresses and phone numbers.

January 13, 2015

Michigan School and Licensed Childcare Immunization Rule for Claiming a Nonmedical Waiver for Immunizations: How do these changes affect schools and childcare centers?

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

Frequently Asked Questions:

What does this new rule allow to happen?

The new rule allows the parent/guardian the opportunity to have their concerns and questions about immunizations addressed. It allows scientific-based education and resources to be provided.

What does the new rule change?

The new rule requires parents/guardians who want to claim a nonmedical waiver to receive education from a county health department about the benefits of vaccination and the risks of vaccine-preventable diseases before claiming the waiver.

What is a nonmedical waiver?

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

How does this new rule affect Michigan's schools and childcare centers?

- The new rule requires schools and child care centers to refer parents/guardians requesting a nonmedical waiver for immunizations to the county health department for immunization waiver education and waiver certification
- Schools and childcare centers will only be able to accept a certified State of Michigan Immunization Waiver Form

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 program
- Kindergarten, 7th grade, and any newly enrolled student into the school district

What is considered a certified, nonmedical waiver?

A certified, nonmedical waiver is the State of Michigan Immunization Waiver Form with a revision date of January 1, 2015, which has the county health department stamp and signature of the authorizing agent completing parent/guardian immunization education.

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?

Based on the new rule, parents/guardians will no longer be able to submit an uncertified immunization waiver form to the school or childcare center. Parents/guardians will need to:

1. Contact their county health department to receive immunization waiver education and to obtain a certified State of Michigan Immunization Waiver Form.
2. Take the certified State of Michigan Immunization Waiver Form to their child's school or childcare.
3. Waiver forms that are altered cannot be accepted by schools or child care centers.

What documentation will parents/guardians submit to the school or childcare center?

Parents/guardians will need to submit to the school or childcare center the completed, certified, nonmedical immunization waiver form and/or complete immunization record. Students who do not comply with having either a completed immunization record or a certified waiver form are to be excluded from school or childcare unless they are in the 'dose waiting' (provisional) period.

Will the schools/childcare centers need to document the certified, nonmedical waiver into the Michigan Care Improvement Registry (MCIR) under the School Immunization Registry System (SIRS)?

Yes, the school or childcare center will need to:

1. Record the nonmedical waiver into SIRS.
2. Send a copy of the nonmedical waiver to the county health department with the immunization report and waiver report.
3. Maintain the nonmedical waiver form on file with immunization records.

What if a child has a medical contraindication to a vaccine?

This new rule does not change the existing process for medical contraindications for vaccination. A current State of Michigan Medical Contraindication Form must be completed and signed by a physician and submitted to the school or childcare center.

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%; some school buildings have higher waiver rates. This leaves communities vulnerable to diseases such as measles, chickenpox, and pertussis (whooping cough). Immunizations are one of the most effective measures to protect children from harmful diseases and even death.