

NEWS RELEASE

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IMMUNIZATION SUSPENSIONS ON THE DECLINE

Only 53 high school students in the North Bay Parry Sound district faced suspension last month, pending proof of mandatory immunizations. This number is down dramatically compared to the 129 suspensions in 2010 and 156 suspensions in 2009.

Now that the high school suspension process is completed, Health Unit staff are working with parents of 17,123 elementary school students to update their public health immunization records. April 28 is the first day of suspension for 75 students from 34 elementary schools in the district. The next suspension date for the remaining 31 elementary schools is May 17. The *Immunization of School Pupils Act* gives the Health Unit the authority to suspend students who do not have up-to-date immunization records.

During the past two years, the Vaccine Preventable Diseases team at the Health Unit focused on increasing immunization compliance and reducing suspensions among students. They achieved this through strategic communication with the parents of students. Although the H1N1 flu pandemic interrupted normal immunization record assessment and suspension processes in elementary schools in 2010, the trend still shows a decline in suspensions compared to the previous year.

Health units are required to maintain complete immunization records on every student registered in a school in their district. When parents or guardians receive a notice from the Health Unit indicating their child's immunization information is missing, it does not mean the child will actually be suspended. Students are removed from the suspension list when the Health Unit receives the missing information.

If you have any questions, call the Health Unit at 705-474-1400 or 1-800-563-2808, ext. 2252. You can also visit www.healthunit.biz for general information on childhood immunizations.

Quick Facts

Even though a child's immunizations may be up to date, health unit files may not be. Here's how to update a child's information:

- Physicians do not report to the health unit what immunizations they give in their offices. Parents or guardians must get the information from their physician's office and provide it to the health unit.

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- A child may have received their immunizations in a different area of Ontario. Parents or guardians may need to contact the health unit in that area to get the required information to submit to the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit.
- If a child's yellow card lists all the immunizations they have had, then a copy of it can be provided to the health unit to ensure records can be updated and completed.

If a child does need immunizations, parents or guardians can:

- Call the Health Unit at 705-474-1400 or 1-800-563-2808, ext. 2252 to make an appointment for the required immunizations.
- Contact their physicians' offices to get the child immunized and ensure the Health Unit receives that information to update public health records.

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