

November 13, 2013

Georgia Department of Education  
Dr. John D. Barge  
State School Superintendent  
205 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive SE  
Atlanta, GA 30334

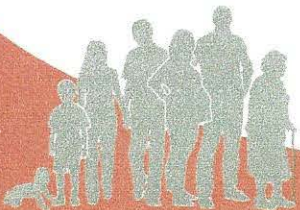
Dear Dr. Barge:

Georgia's immunization requirements for children attending 7th grade have been revised to align with the current recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP). Beginning in the 2014-2015 school year, 7<sup>th</sup> graders will be required to have Tdap and Meningococcal vaccines prior to entering school.

The addition of these new school requirements will lead to an increase in immunization coverage levels in Georgia and reduce disease not only in these populations but throughout the state. Data from the National Immunization Survey (NIS) ranked Georgia 39<sup>th</sup> in Tdap rates and 22<sup>nd</sup> in meningococcal rates. Implementation of these new requirements will increase vaccine coverage rates and protect Georgia children enrolled in school as well as family members and others in the community. We are optimistic that this reduction in disease rates will concomitantly reduce school absentee rates and thereby also improve students' performance.

Effective July 1, 2014 children born on or after January 1, 2002 who are attending 7<sup>th</sup> grade and for new entrants into a Georgia school grades 8th through 12th must have received one dose of Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis) vaccine and one dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine.

"New Entrant" means any child entering any school in Georgia for the first time or entering after having been absent from a Georgia school for more than twelve months or one school year.



The Georgia Department of Public Health Certificate of Immunization Form 3231 is currently being revised to reflect the new seventh grade requirements.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brenda Fitzgerald".

Brenda Fitzgerald, MD  
Commissioner

BF: sm

cc: Pat O'Neal, MD  
Steven Mitchell