

## **NEWS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release:  
December 28, 2017

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### **North Dakota Department of Health Announces Changes to Child Care and School Immunization Requirements**

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) recently changed North Dakota Administrative Rules requiring children attending child care and students in grades kindergarten through 12 to meet a minimum number of required immunizations before they are allowed to attend. The child care changes are effective January 1 and the school changes are effective with the 2018 – 2019 school year.

“Ensuring children are up-to-date on vaccinations is the best way to keep children healthy,” says Lexie Barber, epidemiologist with NDDoH.

Starting January 1, 2018, the hepatitis B vaccine is required for all children attending child care in North Dakota. Generally, children receive their first dose of hepatitis B vaccine at birth, followed by a second dose at two months and a third dose at six months.

For the 2018 – 2019 school year, one dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV4) is now required for students entering seventh through 10th grade and a second dose is required for 11th through 12th. Previously, one dose of MCV4 was required for seventh grade entry. MCV4 protects against meningococcal disease, a serious bacterial infection that can cause meningitis and possibly lead to death or permanent disability within hours of first symptoms. Ideally, children should receive one dose of MCV4 when they are 11 to 12 years old and a booster on or after their 16th birthday.

Also for next school year, one dose of the adolescent vaccine that protects against whooping cough, Tdap, is now required for grades seventh through 12th; previously it was only required for seventh grade.

In addition, beginning next school year schools are required to exclude children not compliant with school immunization requirements by October 1. The rule previously stated children must

be excluded from school if they are not compliant with school-required immunizations within 30 days of enrollment. Changing the rule to October 1 standardizes the exclusion date.

The new North Dakota immunization requirement is consistent with recommendations by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). Children can be vaccinated at local public health units or private health care providers. Parents are encouraged to avoid waiting until the last minute to get their child vaccinated. For more information on child care or school immunization requirements, contact Lexie Barber, NDDoH, at 701.328.2335 or visit [www.ndhealth.gov/Immunize/Schools-ChildCare](http://www.ndhealth.gov/Immunize/Schools-ChildCare) for a visual listing of recommended immunizations.

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