MINNESOTA MDH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Protecting, maintaining and improving the health of all Minnesotans

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: **July 31, 2012**

TO: **School Administrators, Principals, and Superintendents**

FROM: **Margo Roddy, Immunization Program Manager**

SUBJECT: **Media article regarding school immunization rates**

The purpose of this memo is to inform you about an upcoming article in the Pioneer Press regarding kindergarten-level immunization exemption rates. It is anticipated that the article will be published in early August but wanted to make you aware of it as soon as possible. Additionally, as a school administrator, you may receive questions from parents and the public in response to this article and we wanted to provide some background information to assist you in responding.

MDH received a data request from the Pioneer Press on Minnesota's school immunization exemption rates, specifically kindergarten-level immunization exemption rates. As you may know, these data are considered public information. MDH provided the data to the Pioneer Press showing immunization exemption rates under the Minnesota school immunization law for individual schools or school districts statewide. The data is for kindergarteners who entered the school system during the 2011-12 school year.

Due to the relatively small number of students in some schools, MDH removed the line item entries for 20 individual schools or school districts from this list. The concern was that in providing data on individual schools/school districts it would make it possible to identify the exemption status of individual students. Instead, MDH provided aggregate data for 20 schools/school districts, taken as a group. In all, these schools/districts had 387 incoming kindergarteners, 69 "conscientious objector" exemptions, and zero medical exemptions, for an overall exemption rate of 17.8%.

The 20 schools/school districts are:

Cleveland Public School
Crosslake Community Charter School
Cyrus
Dugsi Academy
Floodwood
Great Expectations
Kelliher
Kittson Central
Lafayette Public Charter
Lanesboro
Nerstrand Charter School
New City School
New Heights School Inc.
Riverway Learning Community Charter
Schoolcraft Learning Community
South Koochiching
Southside Family Charter School
Spring Grove
Swanville
Wheaton Area School

(*over*)

It is important to note that nearly all schools in Minnesota are in compliance with Minnesota's school immunization law. Last year 98.4% of children were fully immunized when starting kindergarten.

The data provided to the Pioneer Press came from the annual immunization status report (AISR) application. The AISR application is a reporting tool for administrators/school health personnel to provide immunization status data on students in accordance with the School Immunization Law. As you know, the School Immunization Law requires that any student enrolled in a K-12 school show that they were properly immunized or they have claimed a legal exemption to immunization. The law also requires the administrator to complete an annual report, the AISR that summarizes the immunization status of all students in grades kindergarten through 12.

School administrators can access the AISR and pull reports from previous school years at any time. If you need help with the AISR online reporting system or have any questions about the AISR, you may send an e-mail to health.aisr@state.mn.us, or call Lisa Harris at 651-201-3523. If you have questions regarding the School Immunization Law contact the Minnesota Department of Health at 651-201-5503 (metro) or 1-800-657-3970 (greater Minnesota).

Thank you for your continued support of the School Immunization Law and your help in keeping Minnesota kids healthy.

Kindergarten Enrollment by School Year and Vaccine Requirement

2011-2012 School Year

YEAR	VACCINE	ENROLL	CO	ME	Total % of exemptors (CO + ME)	Percent of COs	Percent of MEs
2011-2012	EXEMPT	70638	1085	59	1.6%	1.5%	0.1%
2011-2012	DTP	70638	505	58	0.8%	0.7%	0.1%
2011-2012	POLIO	70638	504	49	0.8%	0.7%	0.1%
2011-2012	MMR	70638	653	121	1.1%	0.9%	0.2%
2011-2012	HEP B	70638	403	37	0.6%	0.6%	0.1%
2011-2012	TD	70638			0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
2011-2012	VARICELLA	70638	906	221	1.6%	1.3%	0.3%

National statistics are not yet available for this year

2010-2011 School Year

YEAR	VACCINE	ENROLL	CO	ME	Total % of exemptors (CO + ME)	Percent of COs	Percent of MEs
2010-2011	EXEMPT	69712	1139	58	1.7%	1.6%	0.1%
2010-2011	DTP	69712	480	43	0.8%	0.7%	0.1%
2010-2011	POLIO	69712	526	37	0.8%	0.8%	0.1%
2010-2011	MMR	69712	632	86	1.0%	0.9%	0.1%
2010-2011	HEP B	69712	413	39	0.6%	0.6%	0.1%
2010-2011	TD	69712			0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
2010-2011	VARICELLA	69712	919	159	1.5%	1.3%	0.2%

National statistics are not yet available for this year