



Public Health Advisory

Monday, December 12, 2022

NYSDOH Increasing Surveillance of Mandatory Childhood Vaccinations in Schools

Unvaccinated Children at Risk of Exclusion from Schools

In a recent survey in collaboration with local school districts, Dutchess County Department of Behavioral & Community Health (DBCH) has identified **significant gaps in compliance with mandatory childhood vaccinations** among school-aged children in Dutchess County. This is likely an unintended consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, which greatly affected providers' ability to administer timely vaccinations for their patients.

The greatest gaps appear in middle and high schools, where many children have not received the required meningitis vaccine or their scheduled tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis booster. Hundreds of children are also missing polio vaccine doses. This is especially significant, with polio detected in neighboring counties and viruses do not respect county lines.

New York State mandates school districts to exclude children who are not up-to-date with mandatory vaccines.

Currently, hundreds of Dutchess County children are at risk of potentially being excluded from school.

The New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) is increasing surveillance of school compliance for mandatory childhood vaccinations and intends to pursue punitive actions such as fines and sanctions for schools, and potentially issue exclusion orders for students.

The Dutchess County Department of Behavioral & Community Health (DBCH) is working to support school districts in providing school-based vaccinations and expanding access to immunization clinics.

Healthcare Providers are urged to be part of the solution by:

- Working with staff to **identify patients** who may have missed mandatory vaccine doses, with a particular focus on polio vaccination.
- **Creating immediate opportunities to address identified gaps.** Consider workflow adjustments and expanded hours, if possible, to meet the diverse scheduling needs of families.
- Thinking outside the box. Consider **scheduling urgent vaccine visits separately from well-child visits** to expedite compliance.

Collaboration and cooperation across the community is required to resolve this urgent situation. Please take prompt measures to ensure children can remain in school and be protected from disease while doing so.

For additional information, contact the DBCH Immunization Program at 845-486-3535.