



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES

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COMMISSIONER

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September 26, 2008

RE: Immunization Requirements for Students Displaced by Hurricane Ike

Dear School Administrator:

The purpose of this letter is to remind school districts of the current immunization rules that affect students displaced by Hurricane Ike and to provide information on how schools can obtain immunization histories for transfer students.

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) rules relating to immunization requirements for school entry allow a student transferring from one Texas school to another Texas school to be provisionally enrolled without proof of required immunizations for up to 30-days. (See the Texas Administrative Code, Title 25, Part I, Chapter 97, Subchapter B, Section 97.69.) As the 30-day period draws closer to an end, if there appears to be a significant number of displaced students who are still having trouble obtaining their immunization records, DSHS will consider whether a short additional provisional enrollment period is possible. The 30-day time period begins when the student begins attending classes at the new school.

Additionally, students displaced by Hurricane Ike and who are considered homeless under the federal McKinney-Vento Act may be admitted to attend school without documentation of required immunizations for up to 30 days [see the Texas Administrative Code mentioned above, Section 97.66(b)]. For more information regarding specific guidelines for homeless students, contact the Texas Education Agency http://www.tea.state.tx.us/hurricane/ike_faq.html#01.

Many schools have electronic access to ImmTrac, the Texas immunization registry. If your school does not have such access to ImmTrac, you may obtain the instructions and form for registration at: www.immtrac.com. All requests for access to ImmTrac from schools who are being asked to admit displaced students due to Hurricane Ike, will be expedited if the school uses the form developed specifically for the Ike response found on the website given above.

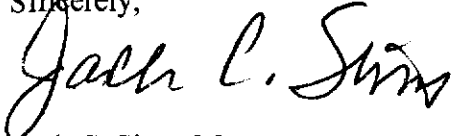
Additionally, there are approximately 7,000 children from the areas affected by Hurricane Ike who have information in the Houston Harris County Immunization Registry (HHCIR) that is not duplicated in ImmTrac. Schools with electronic access to HHCIR can search for children directly, and schools that do not have such access to HHCIR may contact the Houston Department of Health and Human Services (HDHHS) Registry Help Desk at 713-791-6912. HDHHS staff will search both ImmTrac and the HHCIR to see if records are available. It is recommended that schools access ImmTrac first, and contact the HDHHS Registry Help Desk only if the record in ImmTrac is not found or is incomplete. HHCIR is in the process of being phased out, so that Texas will have one central immunization registry-ImmTrac. The HHCIR

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transition to ImmTrac will be completed by December 1, 2008 and ImmTrac is a single repository of immunization information with statewide connectivity.

Please contact the DSHS Immunization Branch at (800) 252-9152 any further questions about immunization requirements. Information is also available at www.immunizetexas.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jack C. Sims". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "J" and "S".

Jack C. Sims, Manager
Immunization Branch