

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT OBTAINING A MICHIGAN SCHOOL AND LICENSED CHILDCARE NON-MEDICAL IMMUNIZATION WAIVER

In 2014, Michigan modified the administrative rules that changed how non-medical waivers for immunizations will be processed for schools and childcare programs. This rule went into effect January 1, 2015.

Why is this rule change important?

Michigan has one of the highest waiver rates in the country. Leelanau and Grand Traverse Counties have some of the highest waiver rates in the state, with approximately 20% of children not fully vaccinated. This leaves communities vulnerable to diseases such as measles, chickenpox and pertussis. Immunizations are one of the most effective measures to protect children from harmful diseases.

Who does this new rule apply to?

The rule applies to all children who are enrolled in public or private

- Licensed childcare, preschools, and Head Start programs
- Kindergarten and 7th grade
- Newly enrolled students in the school district, regardless of grade

What is a non-medical Waiver?

A non-medical waiver is a parent's/guardian's written statement indicating a religious or philosophical objection to particular vaccines.

What is a medical waiver?

If a child has a medical contraindication to a vaccination, a current State of Michigan Medical Contraindication Form must be completed and signed by a physician and submitted to the school or childcare center

How does the new rule affect Michigan's schools and childcare centers?

- The new rule requires schools and childcare centers to refer parents/guardians requesting a non-medical waiver for immunizations to the county health department to obtain a certified waiver.
- Schools and childcare centers will only be able to accept a certified State of Michigan Immunization Waiver Form. These forms can only be obtained at a county health department.

How does a parent/guardian obtain a certified, non-medical waiver?

- Contact your county health department to schedule a waiver appointment
Benzie or Leelanau County: 256-0200
Grand Traverse County: 995-6131
- At the waiver appointment you will meet with a nurse. The nurse will offer an opportunity for you to discuss your concerns about vaccines and will provide you with credible, science based information and resources. The appointment will generally take 15-30 minutes.
- If you still wish to waive some or all vaccines after meeting with the nurse, the nurse will sign and stamp a State of Michigan Immunization Waiver form. You will need to give the form to the school or childcare and a copy will be retained at the health department.

How does waiving vaccines impact my child?

- Your child will be vulnerable to catching the disease.
- Your child can pass the disease on to others who are too young or otherwise unable to be vaccinated.
- Your child may be excluded from school if there is a disease outbreak, possibly for weeks or months (until the outbreak is resolved).

**IF YOU NEED AN IMMUNIZATION WAIVER, PLEASE SCHEDULE YOUR APPOINTMENT BEFORE
AUGUST 1 BY CALLING 256-0200.**