



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Public Health – Women’s & Children’s Health Section

1917 Mail Service Center • Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1917
Tel 919-707-5550 • Fax 919-870-4824

Beverly Eaves Perdue, Governor
Albert A. Delia, Acting Secretary

Laura Gerald, MD, MPH
State Health Director

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MEMORANDUM

TO: North Carolina Colleges and Universities

FROM: Beth Rowe-West, RN, BSN, Head
Immunization Branch

SUBJECT: College Immunization Requirements

The purpose of this memorandum is to answer and clarify questions concerning immunization requirements for college and university students, including acceptable shot records, record retention, and clarification about returning students.

Immunization Records for College/University Entry

Relevant to these questions, the N.C. General Statute states:

The certificate [of immunization] shall state the name of the student, the name of the student’s parent, guardian, or person responsible for the student obtaining the required immunizations [if under 18]; the address of the student [a student’s address at school is acceptable], and the parent, guardian or responsible person [if under 18]; the date of birth of the student; the sex of the student; the number of doses of the vaccine given; the date the doses were given; the name and address of the physician or local health department administering the required immunizations; and other relevant information required by the Commission. G.S. 130A-154(a)

A person who received immunizations in a state other than North Carolina shall present an official certificate of immunization or record of immunization to the college or university. This certificate must include the information as listed above, including the type and number of doses of administered vaccine and the dates of the first MMR and the last DTP and polio. G.S. 130A-154(b). For out of state records, a date containing only a month and year is acceptable by law.

Currently, a Student Permanent Health Record that a student provides from a N.C. school meets the requirements for entrance to a college or university. Generally, the current NC WISE (public school electronic system) report does **not** meet all the requirements for admission to colleges or universities in North Carolina; however, if an NC WISE report is found to meet all of the requirements to be an “official certificate of immunization”, then it would be acceptable for school entry. High school transcripts from a N.C. school may or may not include a NC WISE shot record. A student should get verification from their high school if the question arises. Remember, a shot record must have a provider name and address identified on the record to be acceptable for school entry. It does not require a signature, but must have a provider name. The only exception to this is a Student Permanent Health Record from N.C.

Record Retention

For public colleges and universities, immunization records are to be retained permanently if the college or university administered a vaccine to the student (http://www.records.ncdcr.gov/schedules/unc_system_general_schedule.pdf). All other immunization records are to be retained based on the retention policy set forth at each individual college or university. The same retention policy is recommended for other colleges and universities as well.

It is understandable that schools may prefer alternate methods for record retention. A school's electronic retention of an immunization record can be an acceptable practice; however, that electronic record must reflect accurately those items required to appear on a Certificate of Immunization as set forth in the General Statute. For example, the records in NCIR do meet all the requirements of the General Statute cited and are a way to retain records permanently. But, to date, a typical North Carolina NC WISE immunization record does not contain the information required by the General Statute.

Clarification on Requirements for Returning College/University Students

This memo also addresses a note of clarification regarding college vaccination requirements that are outlined in N.C. Administrative Code 10A NCAC 41A.0401. Some vaccine requirements have exceptions to the law, such as a second dose of measles vaccine is not required if an individual enrolled in college or university for the first time before July 1, 1994. It does not matter how long that student has been out of school since their first enrollment. If a student first enrolled in college prior to July 1, 1994, and has documentation to verify that enrollment, they are not required to have a second dose of measles vaccine. This situation applies to all the vaccine exceptions involving students being enrolled previously at a college or university.

For questions and comments please send an email to imminfo@dhhs.nc.gov. Your question will be forwarded to the appropriate person for response.

Thank you for all you do to protect the health of college and university students across the state.

cc: Regional Immunization Consultants
Jessica Gerdes
Carol Tyson

