Colorado Senate Bill 20-163: School Entry Immunization

What Does The Law Mean?



Senate Bill 20-163: School Entry Immunization aims to keep Colorado communities protected from vaccine-preventable diseases by modernizing school entry immunization requirements. The bill was signed into law by Governor Polis on June 26, 2020 and took effect during the 2021-22 school year. Supported by the vast majority of Colorado voters, strengthening Colorado's immunization law was a long-awaited policy solution.

What the law does:

Standardizes the exemption process and forms

- Preserves the nonmedical exemption option so that parents with deeply held beliefs are not required to vaccinate
- Requires the use of a state-issued form when electing an exemption from school-required vaccines
- Establishes two ways to obtain a Certificate of Nonmedical Exemption: complete the state's Online Immunization Education Module or get a Colorado-licensed immunizing provider's signature on the standardized exemption form

Creates healthier, safer schools

- Establishes a "vaccinated child standard" of 95% for all school-required vaccines, where the immunization rate goal for every school is 95% of the student population to be vaccinated
- Provides additional resources and support to help schools and communities reach this goal
- Requires schools to actively notify parents of school MMR immunization and exemption rates each year

Ensures more accurate, efficient, and useful immunization data systems

- Requires all immunizing providers to report immunization and exemption information into the Colorado Immunization Information System (CIIS)

What hasn't changed:

- No parent is required to vaccinate their child if they are opposed.
- Parents can remove their child's information from the Colorado Immunization Information System (CIIS).
- Immunization and/or exemption information remains confidential and private.
- Parents of students who solely participate in a nonpublic home-based education program under §22-33-104.5, C.R.S. and do not attend a public, private, or charter school for a portion of the day are not required to submit the state-issued standard Certificate of Nonmedical Exemption and can instead submit a signed statement of nonmedical exemption.

What does this mean for me if I am a:

PARENT OR CAREGIVER

- Continue to keep your child(ren) up to date on school- and child care-required and recommended vaccinations and submit immunization information to your school or child care facility at the required deadlines and intervals.
- To obtain a Certificate of Nonmedical Exemption, you will be required to complete the Online Immunization Education Module or get a Colorado-licensed immunizing provider's signature on the state's standardized exemption form, both issued by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE).

SCHOOL OR CHILD CARE CENTER

- Ensure children and students are in compliance with Colorado law (Board of Health rule 6 CCR 1009-2) which requires all students attending Colorado schools and licensed child cares to be vaccinated against certain diseases, unless an exemption is filed.
- To meet the "vaccinated child standard," perform activities to reach 95% vaccination coverage across your school or child care center.
- Send CDPHE's annual parent letter (K-12 or child care) to your school's families by February 15 of each year.
- Enroll in the Colorado Immunization Information System (CIIS).
- Stay up to date on the current law and rules by following Board of Health meetings and staying engaged with communications from CDPHE and Immunize Colorado.

HEALTH CARE PROVIDER

- Encourage your patients to stay up-to-date on recommended and school-required vaccines.
- Continue to train staff on helpful strategies for communicating with parents about the benefits of vaccination.
- Enroll in the Colorado Immunization Information System (CIIS). Continue to input patient immunization and exemption data into CIIS to maintain a clear picture of community protection against vaccine-preventable diseases for public health response.
- Stay up to date on the current law and rules by following Board of Health meetings and staying engaged with communications from CDPHE and Immunize Colorado.

Additional Actions & Resources

- Sign up for Immunize Colorado's newsletter andemail alerts.
- Learn more about vaccine exemptionson the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment website.
- Look up your school or child care center's immunization rates at COVaxRates.com.
- Engage in the Board of Health rulemaking process as appropriate.
- View school and child care immunization resources from Immunize Colorado.

Scan the QR code to learn more about school-required vaccines and exemptions in Colorado: