Memorandum To: Directors of Education
Supervisory Officers
Secretary-Treasurers of School Authorities
Director of Provincial Schools Branch

From: George Zegarac
Deputy Minister

Date: September 19, 2013

Subject: Amendment to Ontario Regulation 645 under the Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA)

I am writing to inform you of recent amendments to Ontario Regulation 645 under the Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA) and the implications that these amendments will have on the exchange of student information between schools/school boards and public health units (PHUs) for immunization program purposes. I am also writing to inform you of an integrated information system known as Panorama which has been implemented in six PHUs.

Regulation 645

With the leadership of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC), the amendments to Regulation 645 under the Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA) will ensure that schools/school boards provide consistent information to every PHU and that the information requested is similar to the information provided to OnSIS. This amendment will confirm your authority under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act to disclose the personal information to the PHUs, reduce the administrative burden of the ISPA reporting and result in fewer students being suspended under the ISPA. The Information and Privacy Commissioner has been consulted on the amendments.

The changes to the regulation clarify the specific data elements schools/school boards are required to disclose to PHUs. Effective immediately, if a school/school board has collected and maintains the pupil information, it is required to disclose the following data elements to a PHU: pupil’s full name, address and telephone number; if applicable, every alternate name of the pupil; pupil’s sex; pupil’s date of birth; name of the school attended by the pupil and the identifying number, if any, assigned by the Ministry of Education (EDU) to the school; pupil’s school grade or class; pupil’s Ontario Education Number (OEN), if one has been assigned to the pupil; full name, address and telephone number of every parent of the pupil; pupil’s country of birth; preferred language or languages of the pupil’s parents.
In addition to specifying consistent personal information to be collected by every PHU, the key new data element identified in the regulation is the OEN, and the authority for schools/school boards to provide the OEN to PHUs. Medical officers of health will use the OEN to more accurately match immunization records to student records. Changes to the regulation also provide Medical officers of health with the authority to stipulate reasonable time frames and secure mechanisms for the transfer of data from school boards to PHUs.

The amendment to the regulation has also added three new designated diseases requiring proof of immunization for school attendance. Parents will be required to provide proof of their child’s immunization against meningococcal disease, pertussis, and varicella, or a valid statement of exemption, to medical officers of health beginning July 1, 2014.

Panorama

The amendments to Regulation 645 will support the rollout of a new immunization information repository known as the Panorama system. This initiative is intended to improve accuracy of student immunization records resulting in better health outcomes, as well as reduce the number of school suspension notices being sent to parents and the number of days students are absent from school as a result of suspension or illness from vaccine-preventable diseases.

To further support the implementation of Panorama, a new standardized process will be put in place for creating and transferring student data files from schools/school boards to PHUs.

Beginning in fall 2013, a first group of six PHUs will be using Panorama to record and track students’ immunization records. A total of 18 school boards fall within the catchment area of these PHUs, and will be required to submit student data files using the standardized process and format. The remaining 30 PHUs and 54 school boards will implement the new standardized process and format between March and August 2014.

The attached FAQ document is intended to assist you with questions that you may have about implementation of the regulation changes. Also attached is a copy of the amended regulation which is also available on the e-laws website at: www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws_regs_900645_e.htm.
Working jointly with MOHLTC, EDU will schedule optional teleconference sessions for boards. Please send the name and email address of your board representative to: Healthy.Schools@ontario.ca.

For further information, please do not hesitate to contact your Regional Office.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

George Zegarac
Deputy Minister

Attachments:

Amendment to Ontario Regulation 645 under the *Immunization of School Pupils Act*
Memo from Dr. Arlene King to Medical Officers of Health

c: Arlene King, MD, MHSc, FRCPC
    Chief Medical Officer of Health