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Fort Immediate Release

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Iowa Department of Public Health announces changes to student vaccine requirements

The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH), Bureau of Immunization, has completed the administrative rules process to require meningococcal (A,C,W,Y) vaccine for students enrolling in 7th and 12th grades. The administrative rule change became effective January 11, 2017, and will be implemented at the beginning of the upcoming 2017-2018 school year.

The change requires a one-time dose of meningococcal (A,C,W,Y) vaccine received on or after 10 years of age for children in grades 7 and above, if born after September 15, 2014; and 2 doses of the vaccine for children in grade 12, if born after September 15, 1999; or 1 dose if received when the child was 16 years of age or older.

Meningococcal disease is a very serious, life-threatening disease. It is caused by bacteria that can infect the blood, brain and spinal cord. The bacteria are spread through upper respiratory droplets, such as saliva. Approximately 10-15% of people with meningococcal disease die even with appropriate treatment. Of those who recover, up to 20% suffer from serious after-effects, such as permanent hearing loss, limb loss, or brain damage. Meningococcal vaccines are very safe and effective at preventing meningococcal disease. The meningococcal vaccine is 85-100% effective at preventing infection from the sub-types of meningococcus found in the vaccine.

The Lee County Health Department is partnering with local secondary schools to inform parents of this new requirement for vaccines prior to the start of the 2017-2018 school year. All students who meet the guidelines listed above will be required show proof of the required number of doses of the Meningococcal (A,C,W,Y) **BEFORE entering school in the fall**. Parents may receive a notice about this new requirement from their child's school and should read the notice carefully. Some students may have already received this vaccine. If you feel your child has already received the vaccine, please contact your child's health care provider to determine if your child's record reflects vaccination that meets the new requirement. Questions about this new requirement may also be directed to the nurse at the child's school or the immunization staff at Lee County Health Department at 319-372-5225. More information can also be found at www.idph.iowa.gov/immtnb/immunization/laws.

The Lee County Health Department is dedicated to providing vaccines through the Vaccines for Children program. Please visit the LCHD website at www.leecounty.org for information about our immunization clinics, eligibility requirements and schedule.