

May, 2014

Dear Administrator:

This letter is to reiterate immunization requirements for summer camps to be held on college campuses. Last summer, a case of measles occurred in a young adolescent from abroad who was visiting the United States (US) to attend a summer program on a New York State (NYS) college campus which had not applied for a permit to operate as a summer camp. The child went on to expose more than 300 children and adults. No immunization or health records were available for any of the program attendees and the entire group was required to be quarantined. Before the travelers could leave the US, vaccine records had to be obtained and reviewed for each exposed individual. This required a large amount of time and effort on the part of the college and local and state health departments and disruption of planned activities for attendees.

Fortunately, all international travelers were able to obtain copies of their vaccine records from their country of origin and were able to demonstrate immunity to measles. If any of the exposed individuals had not been able to demonstrate measles immunity, they would have been required to be quarantined in the college facility for 21 days; missing their return flight and limiting the use of college campus facilities. The lack of availability of vaccination records for these exposed individuals added days to the disease investigation and response. Many vaccine-preventable diseases are occurring abroad, and similar situations have occurred in the past.

To better control the spread of vaccine-preventable diseases, it is highly recommended that participants in group activities at colleges be fully vaccinated and bring copies of vaccine records to the program. Vaccine standards differ internationally, but having immunization and health information readily available allows for a timely and appropriate public health response including providing appropriate vaccination to control illness when required.

Some programs may qualify as children's camps. Children's camps are required to maintain vaccine records and have permits to operate from the local health departments (LHD) that have jurisdiction in the counties in which the colleges are located. Overnight camps are programs for 10 or more children under the age of 18 years old, which operate for at least 72 continuous hours and include provisions for overnight housing of children. Summer day camps are programs for 10 or more children under 16 years of age, have two or more activities, and operate five or more days in a two week period. Any questions regarding whether or not a program qualifies as a children's camp should be directed to the appropriate LHD.

To protect your campus and those participating in activities, please thoroughly review all applications from groups requesting the use of your campus and contact your [LHD or regional office of the NYS Department of Health](#) for additional guidance. If the group needs to apply as a children's camp, the LHD or regional office can assist in that process.

Having the necessary applications and medical histories, including vaccination histories, will help ensure safe and healthy environments for all groups utilizing college campus facilities.

If you have additional questions about vaccinations, please contact the Bureau of Immunization at 518-473-4437. If you have questions about children's camps, contact the Bureau of Community Environmental Health and Food Protection at 518-402-7600.

Sincerely,

Lynn C. Berger, M.D., M.P.H.
Director
Bureau of Immunization