

Countywide Services Agency

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Health and Human Services

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEW LAW REQUIRES 7th-12TH GRADERS TO BE IMMUNIZED AGAINST WHOOPING COUGH

SACRAMENTO – On Friday, July 1, a new law goes into effect requiring California 7th-12th graders to receive a whooping cough (Tdap) booster shot and to show proof of immunization before entering school this fall.

Students who received one dose of the Tdap vaccine after their 7th birthday have met the requirement.

The new law:

- Does not affect students enrolled in summer school on July 1.
- Must be documented in the student's immunization records.
- Applies to both public and private schools.
- Affects all students unless the student has a medical or personal belief exemption.

Since the law affects six grade levels and some schools start the fall semester as early as August, county health officials are encouraging parents to act quickly to avoid a last-minute rush.

“The number of students who need a pertussis vaccine this fall is unprecedented, so don’t wait,” said County Health Officer Glennah Trochet, MD. “Ask your healthcare provider to vaccinate your student now and be sure to take the documentation to your school before the fall term.”

The new law comes in response to a dramatic increase in whooping cough cases within California. In 2010, 10 infants died from whooping cough and 8,383 persons were sickened — the most in California since 1947.

Although infants and small children are routinely vaccinated against pertussis, immunity wanes after a few years. The Tdap vaccine protects older children, adolescents, and adults against pertussis and two other serious diseases, tetanus and diphtheria.

For more information, visit www.shotsforschool.org, or call the Sacramento County Immunization Assistance Program at 875-SHOT (7468).