

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Christopher Mackie, Medical Officer of Health

DATE: 2015 March 19

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## PANORAMA AND VACCINE PREVENTABLE DISEASES STANDARD COMPLIANCE

### **Recommendation**

*It is recommended that Report No. 021-15 re Panorama and Vaccine Preventable Diseases Standard Compliance be received for information and that the Board of Health indicate to the Ministry their non-compliance with the Vaccine Preventable Diseases Standard for the 2014/15 school year and their expected compliance for the 2105/16 school year.*

### **Key Points**

- Boards of Health are being asked to confirm their compliance with the Vaccine Preventable Diseases Standard of the Ontario Public Health Standards
- MLHU is not compliant with the Standard for the 2014/15 school year because of the activities required to implement Panorama, the new provincial electronic database
- It is anticipated that MLHU will resume the assessment of immunization records beginning with the 2015/16 school year

### **Background**

The Public Health Division of the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care has recently asked Boards of Health to confirm their compliance with the requirements of the Vaccine Preventable Diseases Standard of the Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS) and their immunization assessment and suspension plans under the Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA). Boards of Health are being asked specifically whether they will be completing the assessment of immunization records for school pupils outlined in the Immunization Management Protocol, with consideration of suspension of students where appropriate under the ISPA for the 2014/15 school year. This request is being made as a result of recent public interest regarding local public health units' compliance with the assessment and suspension requirements under the ISPA.

Health Units are responsible for maintaining the immunization records of children in licensed child care settings, elementary and secondary schools. Panorama is a comprehensive, secure, web-based information system designed to more efficiently manage immunization information, vaccine inventory and cases and outbreaks of communicable diseases. The immunization component of Panorama was implemented in health units in Ontario in phases beginning in August 2013; Middlesex-London implemented the immunization component at the end of July, 2014 in the last phase of implementation.

In January 2015, Immunization Branch staff conducted an informal survey of health units' intent to assess immunization records and suspend students, when appropriate, during the 2104/15 school year. Approximately half of the health units indicated that they were planning to assess but not suspend; four (including MLHU) indicated that they could not assess or suspend; the remainder which included the health units who implemented Panorama in 2013 indicated that they planned to assess all records with varying levels of suspension (e.g., all students when appropriate or students in specific grades). Of those that implemented Panorama in 2013, a number of health units did not complete assessment requirements and none were able to complete the suspension process for the 2013/14 school year.

## Middlesex-London Health Unit Compliance

Up until the planning and implementation of Panorama, the immunization records of students attending schools in the Middlesex-London Health area were assessed annually. Parents were notified when their child's immunization record was not complete according to the ISPA; they were asked to provide proof of immunization, attend a health unit clinic or community health care provider to obtain missing immunization, or provide an exemption affidavit. Students who did not meet those requirements were suspended from school until the missing information was provided to the Health Unit. As well, the Health Unit worked with child care operators to assess the immunization status of children attending a licensed child care setting under the Day Nurseries Act.

The implementation of Panorama at MLHU has resulted in the need for the following:

- 1) Resolution of a large number of duplicate records as the system moved from a local to a provincial database of immunization records,
- 2) Reconciliation of exemption affidavits in the new database,
- 3) Entry of back-log of data (immunization records for new school enterers and updates to existing records), and
- 4) Significant changes in business practices.

Funding (100%) was provided to health units to assist in the implementation activities. However, this funding has not been sufficient to cover all potential staff-related costs. Staff have been working diligently to complete the activities described above but much work remains to be done.

As a result, the assessment of immunization records for children in licensed child care settings, elementary and secondary schools for the 2104/15 school year cannot be completed. It is anticipated the Health Unit will resume that the assessment of immunization records in the 2105/16 school year.

Revisions to the ISPA in July 2014 will also impact the assessment and suspension process. The revised Act includes requirements for three additional vaccines and additional doses of existing vaccines included in the Act. Funding has been requested to assist with the additional requirements under the revised ISPA; communication regarding access to these funds will be provided through the 2015 provincial budget notification process.

Although implementation of Panorama has delayed the normal assessment and suspension processes, in the event of an outbreak at a school or child care centre, MLHU is able to identify, through a time-intensive process, which students have incomplete immunizations and exclude them from school when necessary.

## Conclusion

Activities required to complete the implementation of Panorama have caused the assessment of immunization records for children and students to be suspended for the 2014/15 school year. As well, additional immunization requirements under revised Immunization of School Pupils Act, which came into effect in July 2014, add to the workload required for the assessment of immunization records for students. It is anticipated that the assessment of immunization records will resume with the 2105/16 school year.

This report was prepared by Ms. Marlene Price, Manager, Vaccine Preventable Diseases Team.



Christopher Mackie, MD, MHSc, CCFP, FRCPC  
Medical Officer of Health