

2013 Annual Review of Statutory Childhood Immunization Requirements

Section 32.1-46 F of the *Code of Virginia* requires the State Board of Health to perform an annual review of the childhood immunization requirements specified in § 32.1-46, and to make recommendations for revision. This statute requires that parents, guardians and persons standing in loco parentis shall cause their children to be immunized in accordance with the immunization schedule developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Academy of Family Physicians (*Recommended Childhood and Adolescent Immunization Schedule*). This section also states that vaccines required for school and day care attendance are those contained in the State Board of Health's *Regulations for the Immunization of School Children (Regulations)* and specifies those vaccines, at a minimum, that must be required by the *Regulations*.

Since 2012, there have been several changes in the ACIP recommended immunization schedule; however none affect the vaccines currently required for school attendance. In order to maintain consistency with the ACIP immunization schedule, the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) continues to recommend as it did in 2011 certain revisions to the vaccines required for school and day care attendance. Should the General Assembly amend § 32.1-46 of the *Code of Virginia*, the State Board of Health would need to make corresponding amendments to the *Regulations*.

§ 32.1-46 A 4. Tetanus, Diphtheria, acellular Pertussis (Tdap)

The ACIP has recommended that Tdap vaccine should be administered when indicated regardless of the interval since the last tetanus or diphtheria toxoid-containing vaccine. This recommendation was incorporated into the ACIP 2012 immunization schedule. The *Code* and the *Regulations* currently require a booster dose of Tdap vaccine for all children entering the 6th grade only if at least five years have passed since the last dose of tetanus-containing vaccine.

Pertussis disease is increasing both nationally and in Virginia. Eliminating the 5 year minimum interval language as it relates to Tdap vaccine administration will help ensure adolescents are optimally protected from pertussis. A consideration of this change has also been recommended by the Health Commissioner's Pertussis Prevention Task Force.

§ 32.1-46 A 11. Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV) 13

Another inconsistency in the *Code* when compared to ACIP recommendations is for pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV). In 2000, ACIP recommended routine use of PCV7 for all children aged 2-23 months and for children aged 24-59 months who are at increased risk for pneumococcal disease. In 2007, ACIP revised this recommendation for routine use to include all children aged 2-59 months. While ACIP recommends this vaccine for children up to 59 months of age, the *Code* requires it only for children under the age of two. Per policy, many local health departments have historically provided this vaccine at no cost for all children up to 59 months of

age. VDH recommends revisions in the *Code* to require this vaccine for children up to 59 months of age, to be consistent with the more recent ACIP recommendation.

Finally, two subsections of the *Code* should also be considered for technical amendments.

- § 32.1-46 A 11. Reference to 7-valent pneumococcal conjugate (PCV) vaccine should be removed in this subsection. The 7-valent formulation is no longer available (replaced by a 13-valent vaccine) making this reference obsolete. It is recommended that this subsection be amended to state "properly spaced pneumococcal conjugate (PCV) vaccine for children less than two (or five if that change is made) years of age". Regardless of action taken on the suggested expansion of the requirement for PCV vaccine to all children up to 59 months of age, VDH recommends that the consideration of the technical language change still occur.
- § 32.1-46 A 9. A second recommendation is to remove the word "susceptible" from the varicella vaccine requirement. No other required vaccine includes this word as a condition of vaccination. The *Regulations* have been amended to include varicella among the diseases for which demonstration of existing immunity exempts the child from the immunization requirement.