



Department of Health

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www.health.ri.gov

Dear Parents and Guardians of 12th Graders:

We are pleased to announce that the Rhode Island Department of Health's "Vaccinate Before you Graduate" (VBYG) Program will continue to provide immunizations in your child's school. VBYG is now finishing its seventh year, and has vaccinated over 11,000 twelfth grade students in 79 schools.

VBYG is an adolescent vaccination "catch-up" program for high school students in Rhode Island. The program offers the opportunity for students to receive new vaccines and to "catch-up" on vaccinations they missed, as well as receive a seasonal influenza (flu) vaccination. This is important because many vaccines are now required for employment and college entry.

This school year the Health Department strongly suggests your child receive the seasonal influenza (flu) vaccine. The flu is a contagious respiratory illness that can cause mild to severe sickness, and at times lead to hospitalization and even death. The best way to prevent the flu is getting a vaccination each year. Even if your child is up to date on his/her routine vaccinations, seasonal flu vaccination is especially important this year because of the H1N1 (swine flu) pandemic. Although the seasonal flu vaccine is unlikely to provide protection against H1N1 influenza, it will provide protection against seasonal flu, reducing your child's risk of getting sick with both types of flu. Contracting both illnesses will increase the risk for serious complications. CDC expects that 30-50% of the population will get sick with H1N1 this fall. A vaccine against H1N1 is currently in production, but it is not meant to replace the seasonal flu vaccine.

In addition to seasonal flu vaccine, Vaccinate Before You Graduate will continue to provide students with the following vaccines this school year:

- **Hepatitis A Vaccine**
- **Hepatitis B Vaccine**
- **Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccine**
- **Meningococcal Conjugate Vaccine**
- **Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) Vaccine**
- **Polio Vaccine**
- **Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis (Tdap) Vaccine**
- **Varicella (chickenpox) Vaccine**

If you would like your child to participate in the Vaccinate Before You Graduate Program you can:

- 1). View information and print a registration form on line:** go to www.thewellcomp.com
Click on "Vaccinate Before You Graduate"; Click on "Immunizations for 12th. Graders"
- 2). Have your student pick up a packet at the school nurse's office to bring home.**

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 401-222-4624 or Kathy.Marceau@health.ri.gov

Kathy Marceau
School and Adolescent Services Coordinator