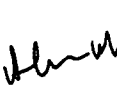


MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Claire Ayer

FROM: Harry Chen, MD, Commissioner 

DATE: February 4, 2014

Subject: S. 194 Posting Aggregate Immunization Rates

The proposed bill requires schools to post aggregate immunization rates at the school entrance in September based on data collected the prior January. We believe that new legislation is unnecessary at this time. Act 157, passed in May 2012, already requires "all schools and child care facilities shall make publicly available the aggregated immunization rates of the student body for each required vaccine using a standardized form that shall be created by the Department of Health."

Starting in June 2013, the Immunization Program provides each school their aggregate immunization rates, reported by January 1st, on a Health Department form. Schools are instructed to make this information publicly available.

The Health Department also makes aggregate immunization rates available for all Vermont public and private schools on the Health Department website in an easy to view spreadsheet. The Health Department spreadsheet allows comparison of immunization rates across schools which may be more meaningful to interested parties (parents). The information can be found at:
<http://www.healthvermont.gov/hc/imm/ImmSurv.aspx>

In 2013, immunization reports were completed by 100 percent of all public and private schools. This was the first year schools received aggregate immunization rates on a Health Department form. If there is concern that schools are not making this information publicly available, the Agency of Education could choose to highlight and enforce this rule.

There are a couple of important cautions that must be noted about the use of the aggregated data to inform decision-making:

1. The data is collected and reported to better understand the percentage of students overall in a school immunized for each required vaccine. Aggregate data will not capture the variation by age or by class.
2. School immunization rates are reported in January. Information posted on Sept 15 will therefore reflect the prior school year. The current school year could be affected by the migration of students, dwindling school enrollments and classroom size.

We believe that we can work with the Agency of Education to increase the use of the data currently available for public reporting without additional legislation.

