



**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
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**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH**  
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February 1, 2011

Dear County and District Superintendents and Charter School Administrators:

### **PERTUSSIS IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENT FOR STUDENTS IN GRADES SEVEN THROUGH TWELVE**

Assembly Bill 354 was signed into law in September 2010. As a result, students entering or advancing to grades seven through twelve in the 2011–12 school year are required to be immunized with a pertussis (whooping cough) vaccine booster called Tetanus Toxoid, Reduced Diphtheria Toxoid and Acellular Pertussis (Tdap). The new requirement goes into effect July 1, 2011, for one year and affects all students—current, new, and transfers—in public and private schools. The law changes for the 2012–13 school year and beyond. On July 1, 2012, AB 354 will require only students who are entering or advancing into grade seven to be immunized with Tdap.

Pertussis is a very infectious disease that can be debilitating at any age and lethal to infants. As of January 7, 2011, there were more than 8,300 cases of pertussis with onset in 2010 reported statewide to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH)—the most reported since 1947. As early childhood immunization does not provide lasting immunity to pertussis, CDPH recommends a Tdap booster immunization for all persons ten years of age and older, yet most people have not received the Tdap booster. As a result, many older students and adults remain susceptible to pertussis, risking their health and the health of their communities. At least 10 infants too young to be immunized have died from pertussis in 2010 in California.

Immunization with Tdap can protect students who have not yet been immunized against the ongoing risk of pertussis and meets the forthcoming requirement for the 2011–12 school year. Please communicate this important information about the risk of pertussis and the new requirement to parents, school nurses, clerks, and other school officials assisting with health records.

The California Department of Education (CDE) and CDPH are working closely together to develop tools and resources for schools to assist in communication, documentation, and reporting procedures, which will be available by early 2011.

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Please ensure that all principals under your authority who are responsible for students in grades six through twelve are apprised of this new immunization requirement.

If you have any questions regarding this subject, please contact Dr. Eileen Yamada, Public Health Medical Officer, CDPH Immunization Branch, by phone at 510-620-3737 or by e-mail at [TdapLaw@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:TdapLaw@cdph.ca.gov), or Linda Davis-Alldritt, School Nurse Consultant, CDE Coordinated School Health and Safety Office, by phone at 916-319-0284 or by e-mail at [ldavisal@cde.ca.gov](mailto:ldavisal@cde.ca.gov). You can also visit the CDE Health Services & School Nursing Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/hn/> or the CDPH Pertussis (Whooping Cough) Web page at <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/Pertussis.aspx> (Outside Source) for specific information.

Sincerely,



Tom Torlakson  
State Superintendent of Public Instruction  
California Department of Education



Mark B Horton, MD, MSPH  
Director  
California Department of Public Health

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cc: Private School Administrators