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To: Parents/Guardians of students enrolled in Colorado schools

From: Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Immunization Branch

RE: Tdap vaccine required at 6th grade entry

Date: May 1, 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian,

In Colorado, students entering 6th grade are required to get the tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis (Tdap) vaccine before they start school. See www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/schoolrequiredvaccines.

Tetanus is a rare, non-contagious disease that can cause painful muscle tightening and stiffness; people can get tetanus through a cut or wound. Diphtheria is a rare, contagious disease that can cause breathing problems, heart failure and other serious issues. Pertussis, or whooping cough, is a very contagious disease that can cause severe coughing spells, difficulty breathing, and other serious issues, especially in infants, toddlers and other people who have weakened immune systems. Adolescents who get pertussis can be sick for up to three months.

Students who are 10 years of age when entering 6th grade can get the Tdap vaccine. Some health care providers may choose to wait until the student is 11 years of age. Parents/guardians of a student entering 6th grade without a Tdap vaccine must file a medical or non-medical exemption in order for their student to attend a Colorado school. See www.colorado.gov/vaccineexemption. If your student doesn't get the Tdap vaccine before 6th grade or doesn't have an exemption on file, he or she will be out of compliance with Colorado school immunization law and may not be allowed to attend school.

For questions or more information, contact cdphe.dcdimmunization@state.co.us.