



STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM
CORDELL HULL BUILDING, 1ST FLOOR
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NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243

2010 Tennessee Immunization Certificate: Frequently Asked Questions and Clarifications

Future updates will be posted to the Tennessee Web Immunization System site at <https://twis.tn.gov>.

1. Where can I obtain a copy of the certificate? Three options:

- a. After logging into TWIS, the “Documents” heading in the left side column includes the immunization certificate, and instructions for completing it. When this certificate is printed, the patient information is blank, and the healthcare provider contact information is pre-printed. The office may make 2-sided photocopies of this version, if desired.
- b. Each patient record in TWIS has a tab labeled “IMM Cert”. From this tab, providers can print out that specific patient’s immunization certificate.
- c. Hard copies may be obtained from a local health department or mailed from the state Tennessee Immunization Program office (615-741-7247).

2. May hard copies of the certificate obtained from public health be photocopied?

- a. Yes. Copies should include the front and back pages of the certificate. However, the state has ample hard copies printed on a heavier card stock than ordinary paper, which makes them sturdier. Practices may obtain as many hard copies as needed from public health – there is no charge for them.

3. Will the certificate be invalid if the back page of the certificate is blank?

- a. No. However, the back page has the state’s accepted schedule and minimum dose interval tables. It is used by school and healthcare staff with questions about the acceptability of a child’s particular dose series. For that reason, providers who can only make one-sided copies are encouraged to staple the back page reference table to certificate.

4. Can the certificate be uploaded into our Electronic Medical Record (EMR) system?

- a. There is no penalty for scanning a hard copy of the new certificate into an EMR. The resulting form must appear the same as the original when printed. Generic certificates or other unofficial lists of immunizations are not acceptable alternatives. The intent of the new rule is to promote the use of the Tennessee Web Immunization System (TWIS) to yield a permanent immunization record that is readily accessible to all; it is hoped that those practices that use scanned versions will continue to pursue a link with TWIS in the longer term.

5. How can we investigate EMR communication with TWIS via electronic data exchange?

- a. The EMR vendor or a practice may contact Nancy Williams (nancy.l.williams@tn.gov or 615-253-1360), the administrator who works with electronic data trading partner

agreements. She can provide a copy of the data trading partner agreement that contains the technical specifications for this process. She also can refer callers to IT specialists for further conversation about the specifications, if needed.

6. Can providers fax a copy of the certificate or use a faxed copy as the original certificate?

- a. The Department of Education determines what it will accept. The Department of Education policy as of April 12, 2010, is that parents or guardians of new enrollees must provide public schools with **either** the original, signed immunization certificate **or e-mail a copy of the scanned certificate**. Schools may proceed with enrolling the student pending the submission of the certificate. Schools may fax certificates as part of the routine of faxing student records from one school to another. For additional information, consult the local school system.

7. What do I do if the TWIS certificate contains an error when printed?

- a. If the error is in a field you cannot alter (such as an incorrect or duplicate shot record entered by a user other than your practice), mark out wrong information and correct it on the printed form (please initial your changes).
- b. Please use the email tool on TWIS from the patient's record to report the problem to the TWIS administrator so it can be corrected.

8. Do all school children need new certificates?

- a. No. Only those enrolling for the first time in a Tennessee school, those enrolling in Kindergarten and all children entering 7th grade.

9. Children already enrolled in a Tennessee school going into 7th grade no longer need to have their hepatitis B vaccine status checked. What about children enrolling in a Tennessee school for the first time who happen to be going into 7th grade?

- a. Children who already have a Tennessee Immunization Certificate on file with the school have already documented one dose of varicella vaccine (or history of disease) and a complete hepatitis B vaccine series. Such children only need to have documentation of their second varicella vaccine (or acceptable alternative evidence of previous disease) and documentation of the tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis booster (Tdap). ALL students new to Tennessee who are issued an immunization certificate for the first time do need proof of hepatitis B immunization.

10. When do children need the new certificate?

- a. They need to provide the certificate no later than the beginning of classes. The certificate is not required at pre-registration. For 2010 only, public schools will allow a grace period through the end of September for parents and guardians who are having difficulty getting the form submitted. Schools appreciate receiving the forms as early as feasible, in order to complete their files.

11. I still have copies of the old forms. How long can we use the old certificates?

- a. All children who begin daycare, preschool or school on or after July 1, 2010, must have the new certificate. Because the academic year for schools begins after this date, old "green forms" will not be accepted. Children who begin attending daycare *before* July 1 may use either the old yellow certificate or the new one.

12. Does the school system require that the health care provider who conducted the school entry health examination also be the one who dates and signs the documentation of that examination on the official immunization certificate?

- a. No. Since the form does require comments on the content of the exam, the provider issuing the immunization certificate may document that the exam took place and the date, if provided a record from a qualified examining healthcare provider showing that the child was examined. This is consistent with the accepted practice of transcribing immunization records onto the form from medical records of an outside provider.

State regulations specify that the health examination must be conducted by a doctor of medicine, osteopathic physician, physician assistant, certified nurse practitioner, or a properly trained public health nurse. Additional information concerning local school entry health examination policies may be provided by the local school system.