

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPT. OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Dear Alaskan:

The most important mission of the Alaska Division of Public Health is to prevent and control epidemics and the spread of infectious disease. One way to achieve that goal is to make sure children are fully immunized, and to help educators enforce Alaska's critical "No-Shots / No-School" regulations.

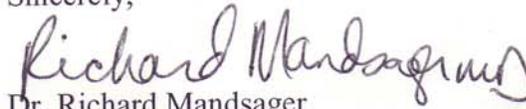
To assist with that objective – and to comply with federal rules governing medical privacy – we have developed a parental authorization form allowing health care providers to share immunization and tuberculosis records with schools and childcare facilities.

The form can be downloaded from the Division of Public Health website at:
www.hss.state.ak.us/dph

Here's why the form is an important tool in the fight against epidemics and disease. The new federal privacy law sometimes causes confusion among providers and schools about their respective roles in protecting medical privacy. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) in some cases allows the exchange of medical information without written parental authorization – for instance, from a provider such as a doctor's office or health clinic to another provider such as a school nurse. But not all Alaska schools or childcare facilities have nurses, so there has been hesitation to share immunization records or results of tuberculosis tests without written parental authorization. This is a problem. Even if a student is fully immunized, state law says the school must have proof or that student will be removed from classes.

I believe the most efficient way to end the confusion is to have a valid authorization form signed by a parent or legal guardian. From that point on, immunization data and TB information can be exchanged unless the parent or guardian revokes authorization. The form that we've developed and endorsed is easy to fill out. It can be downloaded by anyone – providers, schools, childcare operators, parents or guardians. Please use it and help us control and prevent epidemics and disease in Alaska.

Sincerely,



Dr. Richard Mandsager

Director

Alaska Division of Public Health