



Health, Housing & Community Services Department
Public Health Division
(510) 981-5300

Janet Berreman, MD, MPH
Health Officer

Health Advisory

August 1, 2016

SB 277 and Medical Exemption

Current Situation:

As of January 1, 2016, SB277 eliminates personal belief exemptions from existing specified immunization requirements, but allows exemption for medical reasons. A **Medical Exemption** is defined as an exception to required school immunization laws, based upon a medical condition.

California Health and Safety Code, Section 120370(a) provides that a parent or guardian may file a medical exemption to exempt a child from required immunizations. A medical exemption is “a written statement by a licensed physician to the effect that the physical condition of the child is such, or medical circumstances relating to the child are such, that immunization is not considered safe, indicating the specific nature and probable duration of the medical condition or circumstances, including, but not limited to, family medical history, for which the physician does not recommend immunization.” That child shall then be exempt from immunization requirements, to the extent indicated by the physician’s statement. (Cal. Health Safety Code § 120370(a)).

As Interpreted by the California Department of Public Health and the California Department of Education, the written statement filed by a parent or guardian must:

1. Be issued by a Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) or Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (D.O.);
2. State that the physical condition or medical circumstances of the child are such that the required immunization(s) is not considered safe;
3. State which vaccines are being exempted;
4. State whether the medical exemption is permanent or temporary; and
5. State the expiration date, if the exemption is temporary.

Situations in which medical exemptions are appropriate include students with contraindications to vaccination. These are discussed for each vaccine in the [Epidemiology and Prevention of Vaccine-Preventable Diseases \(The Pink Book\)](#) and the **AAP’s Red Book**.

It is important for us as public health and medical practitioners to continue to abide by AAP guidelines and standards of evidence-based practice to ensure the health and well-being of our Berkeley community. We appreciate your cooperation and attention to this matter.

Please distribute to all providers in your practice



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Sources for Information:

SB-277 Public Health: Vaccinations Bill

http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160SB277

Epidemiology and Prevention of Vaccine-Preventable Diseases (Pink Book)

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/pinkbook/index.html>

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