



August 25, 2015

Frequently Asked Questions about Senate Bill 895 for Clinics

What did Senate Bill 895 change about religious exemptions to immunization?

Old religious exemptions to immunization for children in school and child care that were signed before March 1, 2014, are no longer valid. Senate Bill 895 removed the provision that allowed old religious exemptions that were in place before the implementation of the new nonmedical exemption process. Children who have an old religious exemption on file will need new documentation of immunizations, a medical exemption, or a nonmedical exemption.

How will this affect clinics?

Approximately 30,000 children in Oregon have old religious exemptions signed prior to March 1, 2014. Clinics may see an increase in the number of parents seeking education to claim a nonmedical exemption, or seeking a current immunization record in order to provide documentation to the school or child care. More children may visit clinics this winter because they have been issued exclusion letters if they do not have updated documentation of exemption or immunization.

What are the options for parents of children with old religious exemptions?

Parents will have three options:

1. If the child has received the vaccines, the parent needs to fill in the vaccine dates on the Certificate of Immunization Status, sign the form and turn it into the school.

2. If the parent wants a nonmedical exemption for their child, they need to get education about the benefits and risks of immunization from a health care practitioner or the online vaccine education module.
3. If the parent needs a medical exemption for the child, the parent needs to submit a statement from a physician to the school or child care. Medical exemptions must be based on contraindications to immunization. Include the following information when writing a medical exemption: child's name, birthdate, medical condition that contraindicates vaccination, list of vaccines contraindicated, approximate time until condition resolves (if applicable), physician's contact information, signature and date.

What can clinics do?

- This is a great opportunity to discuss vaccines with parents who claimed an exemption for their child years ago. Remind parents to update immunization records with their child's school or daycare every time their child receives a vaccine.
- If you are a health care practitioner and provide education to the parent, print off and complete the Vaccine Education Certificate available at healthoregon.org/vaccineexemption (go to the "For Providers Only" section at the bottom of the page). Mark "yes" next to each vaccine you provided education about for which the parent wants to claim an exemption. The online vaccine education module is also available at the same web address.
- Make sure to screen for and give all recommended vaccines when you give school-required vaccines. When a student comes in for Tdap vaccine, give HPV and meningococcal vaccines as well. Adolescents can be a hard population to reach, and you might not see the patient again for several years. And don't forget about flu vaccine!