



PRESS RELEASE

Prince George's County Public Schools • www.pgcps.org

Dr. John E. Deasy, Superintendent of Schools
14201 School Lane, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

**NOVEMBER 13, 2007
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

CONTACT: John White or Tanzi West
PGCPS Communications, 301-952-6001

Dellia Williams, 301-883-7835
County Health Department

SCHOOLS, HEALTH DEPARTMENT WORKING TOGETHER TO IMMUNIZE ALL SCHOOL CHILDREN

County Schools, Government Go to Court to Provide Children's Immunizations

Putting the educational and health needs of children first, Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) and the County Health Department announced today that parents have been ordered to appear in court so their children can become compliant with State immunization requirements.

"Children should not be deprived of an education when our County offers free immunizations. This is a public health and children's rights issue that we are determined to correct," said Board of Education Chair R. Owen Johnson, Jr., who made the announcement today outside the Circuit Court of Prince George's County. "Children need to be in school to learn. Every day they are not permitted to attend school because they have not received their vaccinations is a missed opportunity."

On Saturday, November 17, 2007, the first of a series of hearings will be held in the Circuit Court of Prince George's County, 14735 Main Street, Upper Marlboro. Parents will appear with 1,671 children, who will receive needed vaccinations administered by the Prince George's County Health Department's licensed health care professionals.

"One of the most important things parents can do to protect their children from vaccine-preventable diseases is to make sure their children receive all their immunizations," said Donald Shell, M.D., M.A, Health Officer "Working in partnership with our county's schools, our goal is to provide immunizations to all children in need. With immunization of children, parents must partner with Health Department to authorize the delivery of services to their child."

-more-



Prince George's County Public Schools • www.pgcps.org

The School System and Health Department have given parents of more than 2,300 students currently out of compliance with State school immunization requirements ample notice of the impending court dates. The following steps have been taken to notify parents of the severity of non-compliance:

1. Letters were sent to the homes of students not in compliance stating the deadline to acquire immunizations. These letters first mentioned the possibility of being summoned to Court.
2. Letters were sent to Physicians on April 24, 2006 to inform them of the new state immunization requirements that went into effect on September 1, 2006.
3. Additional immunization clinics were scheduled on Saturdays, evenings, and at additional sites.

The following steps will be taken if parents/guardians fail to respond:

1. Their name will be forwarded to the Court Liaison for referral to Circuit Court.
2. Parents will receive a letter from the Circuit Court Judge commanding their appearance in Court.
3. When parents appear in Court, the Judge will issue a verbal reprimand and direct them to have their children immunized on site.
4. The Health Department will be on-site to immunize non-compliant students.
5. Students will return to school as soon as they receive their required immunizations

If a parent refuses to attend the Court hearing and/or allow their child to be immunized at Court, a Pupil Personnel Worker will prepare a packet that will facilitate parental referral to Court for further action.