



Polk County Health Department Immunization Q & A

**Question:**

Does a student need to have a new Religious Exemption signed and notarized if the notary stamp/seal has expired?

Answer:

No, as long as the date the exemption was signed was not after the stamp/seal expired. A Religious Exemption that is filled out properly, signed and notarized, is valid for the entirety of the student's school years.

Example:

Valid: Student A has a Religious Exemption that was signed and notarized on 6/5/15 and the notary stamp expires 9/5/15. The stamp/seal was valid when the exemption was signed.

Invalid: Student B has a Religious Exemption that was signed and notarized on 6/5/15 and the notary stamp expired 5/5/15. The stamp/seal was invalid when the exemption was signed.

Iowa Immunization Code states:

7.3(2) A religious exemption may be granted to an applicant if immunization conflicts with a genuine and sincere religious belief.

a. To be valid, a certificate of immunization exemption for religious reasons shall contain, at a minimum, the applicant's last name, first name, and date of birth and shall bear the signature of the applicant or, if the applicant is a minor, of the applicant's parent or guardian and shall attest that immunization conflicts with a genuine and sincere religious belief and that the belief is in fact religious and not based merely on philosophical, scientific, moral, personal, or medical opposition to immunizations.

b. The certificate of immunization exemption for religious reasons is valid only when notarized.

Question:

When we are issuing Provisional Certificates do we need to use the most current version available from the Iowa Department of Public Health?

Answer:

Yes. The most current version is dated April 2012 in the lower right hand corner of the document.

The current version is available at:

<http://idph.iowa.gov/Portals/1/Files/IMMTB/Provisional%20Certificate%20of%20Immunization%202012.pdf>

Question:

When a parent/guardian submits a new Medical/Religious Exemption, do they need to use the most current version available from the Iowa Department of Public Health?

Answer:

Yes. The most current version, dated June 2015 in the lower right hand corner of the document, contains important language and requires more detailed information. If a Medical/Religious Exemption is already in place, the parent/guardian does not need to submit a new exemption. The current version would need to be used if for any reason the existing exemption expired or was found to be invalid.

The current Medical Exemption is available at:

<http://idph.iowa.gov/Portals/1/userfiles/39/Certificate%20of%20Immunization%20Exemption%20-%20Medical%20%20June%202015.pdf>

The current Religious Exemption is available at:

<http://idph.iowa.gov/Portals/1/userfiles/39/Certificate%20of%20Immunization%20Exemption%20-%20Religious%20June%202015.pdf>

Question:

I have a Medical Exemption that does not have any of the boxes marked, is this exemption valid?

Answer:

No. A Medical Exemption must be filled out entirely to be considered valid.

One of the 2 options must be chosen and the vaccines that are contraindicated must be marked.
The provider cannot make their own box and then mark it. (I have seen this done for positive titers, provider must mark the first box or vaccinate)

First Box

The required immunizations would be injurious to the health and well-being of the applicant or any member of the applicant's family or household. In this circumstance, a medical exemption may apply to a specific vaccine(s) or all required vaccines. If, in the opinion of the physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant issuing the medical exemption, the exemption should be terminated or reviewed at a future date, an expiration date shall be recorded on the certificate of immunization exemption.

An expiration date is not required for this form to be valid. **If there is an expiration date assigned,** the exemption will expire on that date. If there is not a valid Certificate of Immunization in place or a new Medical Exemption signed, the student would then need to be excluded until the proper certificate/exemption is submitted.

Second Box - this is only for MMR or Varicella - no other vaccine

Administration of the required vaccine would violate minimum interval spacing. In this circumstance, an exemption shall apply only to an applicant who has ***not received prior doses*** of the exempted vaccine. ***An expiration date, not to exceed 60 calendar days, and the name of the vaccine exempted shall be recorded on the certificate of exemption.***

An expiration date is required if this box is marked, and the exemption will expire on that day. If there is not a valid Certificate of Immunization in place, the student would then need to be excluded until the proper certificate is submitted.