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## State of Wisconsin

## Department of Health and Family Services

December 28, 2001

To: Group Day Care Licensees  
Day Camp Licensees

BRL - DC - Memo 01-04

From: Patty Hammes, Director *Patty Hammes*  
Bureau of Regulation and LicensingRE: Chicken Pox (Varicella) Vaccine  
Asthma in the Child Care Setting

The purpose of this memo is to review the new Varicella or chicken pox vaccine requirement and also to provide information about asthma in the child care setting.

**Varicella or Chicken Pox Vaccine**

The Varicella or chicken pox vaccine is now a required immunization for all children ages 2 and above who are enrolled in a licensed child care center or day camp. The Department of Health and Family Services notified centers of this new requirement earlier this year. If a child has already had the disease, the parent will be asked to provide the approximate date of the illness. The green immunization form (DPH - 4192) was revised to provide a space for the vaccination date or date of illness. Please alert parents (or guardians) of children in your care of this new requirement. There are several web sites with information about vaccines and immunization including [www.cdc.gov/nip](http://www.cdc.gov/nip), [www.immunize.org](http://www.immunize.org), and [www.immunizationinfo.org](http://www.immunizationinfo.org) and the DHFS web site [www.dhfs.state.wi.us/immunization](http://www.dhfs.state.wi.us/immunization).

**Asthma in the Child Care Setting**

Asthma is one of the nation's most common chronic diseases, and the incidence of children diagnosed with asthma is on the rise. The rate of increase was the highest in children aged 0 - 4 years as reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. There are currently over more than 83,000 children in Wisconsin with this serious lung disorder. With more parents working outside the home, more child care facilities are finding themselves providing care to children with special health care needs such as asthma. In order for group child care centers to adequately care for a child with asthma; good communication with parents is essential. The use of the health history form found on the reverse side of the child enrollment form (CFS - 62) is required under the licensing rules {HFS 46.04(6)(a)6 and HFS 55.44(6)(g)}. Parents should return the form fully completed prior to the child's first day of attendance. The center director and appropriate center staff including the child's teacher should review the information provided and discuss with the parent any special health conditions that the child may have. The parent should supply specific information related to the triggers of a child's asthma, the signs and symptoms of an attack and emergency medical procedures to be followed. Make sure that the parent also provides information on medications to be administered to the child, either on a regular basis or at the onset of an attack.

What exactly is asthma? According to the American Lung Association, asthma is a chronic inflammatory disorder of the airways that can be life threatening. A cold or other respiratory infection or when a person with asthma breathes in something that bothers their lungs can bring on an asthma attack. Some common environmental triggers include cigarette smoke, dust, animal dander, molds, and feathers. When an asthma attack occurs, 3 changes take place in the lungs.

1. The muscles around the air tubes tighten.
2. The air tubes swell up.
3. The cells in the air tubes make more mucus than normal. This mucus is very thick and sticky. It tends to clog up the air tubes.

These changes combine to cause the air tubes to narrow, making it hard for air to get into and out of the lungs. An asthma attack can occur suddenly or it may take a long time, even days, to develop. The important thing is that every child has a built-in early warning system that can signal when symptoms are on the way.

Parents, children and child care providers need to talk about the signs and symptoms of the child's asthma attack. Coughing, shortness of breath and a feeling of tightness in the chest are common signals that an asthma attack is beginning, but they are not the only signs. Each child's signals may be different, and good communication between parents and providers is crucial.

The American Lung Association of Wisconsin has developed a training program entitled **Counting on You... Responding to Kids with Asthma** that helps child care providers better care for children with asthma. The program helps participants learn how to avoid asthma triggers, identify warning signs of an asthma attack and proper asthma medication techniques for children in their care. This program is available to all child care providers and is free of charge. Please contact Jeremy Otte at 800-LUNG USA (586-4872) to inquire about the closest workshop in your area. The Lung Association is working with the Wisconsin Child Care Information Center to have videos and other materials available to child care providers on this topic.

I am attaching a fact sheet **Asthma in the Child Care Setting** taken from the ABC's of Safe and Healthy Child Care developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta GA in 1997.

Additional resources on asthma include:

- Allergy and Asthma Network/Mothers of Asthmatics, Inc. 2751 Prosperity Avenue, Suite 150, Fairfax, VA 22031; 800-878-4403; [www.aanma.org](http://www.aanma.org)
- Asthma & Allergy Foundations of America, 1125 25<sup>th</sup> St, NW Suite 502, Washington, DC 20005; 800 - 7ASTHMA; [www.aafa.org](http://www.aafa.org)
- American Lung Association of Wisconsin, 150 S. Sunny Slope Road, Suite 105, Brookfield, WI 53005; 800-586-4872 (in Wisconsin); [www.lungusa.org](http://www.lungusa.org)
- The National Asthma Education and Prevention Program, The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute Information Center; PO Box 30105, Bethesda, MD 20824-0105; (301) 251-1222;
- American Academy of Pediatrics, PO Box 747, Elk Grove Village, IL 60009-0747; 800-433-9016 [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org) or [www.schoolhealth.org](http://www.schoolhealth.org)

We have provided a link to these agencies from the Bureau's web site. ([www.dhfs.state.wi.us](http://www.dhfs.state.wi.us), click on Licensing, then click on Child Care) We are in the process of putting DCFS forms on the web site as well. Click on forms and publications for the instructions on how to order forms or to print copies of some forms.

With your continued care and cooperation we can work together to make sure that all children attending a child care program are safe and happy.

Enclosure

C: Licensing Chiefs/Deputies/Specialists  
Interested Parties