

## **Guidance for School Health Personnel on New Students from Haiti**

Due to the recent influx of children from Haiti, the New York State Education Department in collaboration with the New York State Department of Health is providing guidance to schools to assist them in enrolling these students.

### **Haitian Adoptee Humanitarian Parolee Status**

Some of the Haitian children enrolling in schools will be adoptees. Normally, before their admission to the US, all internationally adopted children are required to have a medical examination in their country of origin. However, given the urgency of the current situation, Haitian children entering the US for the purpose of adoption, after January 12, 2010, have been granted *humanitarian parolee status* and were allowed to, and will be allowed to, bypass this overseas medical exam prior to their departure from Haiti. However, it is still important that adoptees coming from Haiti after the earthquake have a medical exam, as soon as possible, after their arrival in the US.

<http://www.cdc.gov/immigrantrefugeehealth/exams/parents-adopting-children-haiti-earthquake.html>

### **Immunizations**

Schools should keep track of the immunization status of these students. A sample “catch up schedule” recommended by NYSDOH is available at:

<http://schoolhealthservices.org/uploads/Catch%20up%20Schedule.pdf>

Further detailed recommendations from the NYSDOH Bureau of Immunization are available on their department’s Health Commerce System which can be accessed through your school district’s Health Provider Network Account (HPN).

### **Physical Exams**

Parents and caregivers are urged to have a medical exam done on each of their children as soon as possible. The New York State Department of Health’s (NYSDOH) Refugee Health Assessment Program offers the recommended medical exam to these children. They may be seen free of charge, if seen by an approved Refugee Health Assessment Provider within 90 days of arrival into the US and prior to any official determination of Medicaid eligibility. Refugee Health Assessment Providers are available in many areas of the state, although these sites may not be conveniently located for all children involved. Parents and caregivers may choose to have their children seen by local clinics or private medical providers, in which case they may be responsible for the cost of the exam. If choosing a local clinic or private provider, caregivers should urge their medical practitioners to screen for conditions of public health and personal health concern, described in part below. More information on the Refugee Health Program along with a list of the Refugee Health Assessment Providers is available by calling the Program at 518-474-4845 or at: <http://www.schoolhealthservicesny.com/news.cfm?story=81>

Most of the children and youth displaced by the earthquake in Haiti are eligible for protection under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento). Under McKinney-Vento, homeless children and youth are entitled to immediate enrollment in school even if they lack the records normally needed for enrollment, including, but not limited to, proof of immunization and/or a physical exam. McKinney-Vento requires each school district to have a homeless liaison to serve as the primary contact between homeless families and school staff, district personnel and local social services agencies and other programs providing services to homeless students. A school district’s homeless liaison is responsible for ensuring, among other things, that homeless students are identified by school personnel and through coordinated activities with other entities and/or agencies; enrolled in and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in school; and receive education services for which they are eligible and are referred to health, mental health, dental and other appropriate services. Additionally, under McKinney-Vento, if homeless children or youth need to obtain immunizations, or immunization/medical records, the enrolling school must immediately refer the children’s parent(s) or guardian(s) to the school district’s

homeless liaison, who must assist the children's parent(s) or guardian(s) in obtaining the necessary immunizations or immunization records. More information is available from:

- NYS-TEACHS, (800) 388-2014 or visit <http://nysteachs.org/info-topic/haiti.html>.
- Melanie Faby, Program Associate for Homeless Education at the State Education Department, (518) 473-0295

School nurses are reminded that although these students may enter school without the required health documents, students can be assessed by a school nurse for the presence of any acute condition and should not be in school if clearly ill (just like any other child in the district). Otherwise, they should just have their medical assessments expedited, with attention to all health care needs not just TB screening, and should not be kept out of school. The state does not require TB screening of students prior to entry, although individual districts can require it.

The following information has been provided by NYSDOH for providers (clinicians) to assist them in diagnosing illnesses in children from Haiti. SED is providing school health personnel with the same information (see below) to assist them, in both the assessment and referral process for students from Haiti who may appear ill.

**Infectious Disease Considerations (from 2/4/10 NYSDOH memo to Health Care Providers, Hospitals and Local Health Departments)**

*Tuberculosis (TB)*

Rates of TB are very high in Haiti. Clinicians should assess all patients for TB symptoms including cough that lasts 3 weeks or longer, chest pain, coughing up blood or sputum, weakness, fatigue, weight loss, loss of appetite, chills, fever, or night sweats. For more information on the evaluation of TB in this population, see TB Guidance for Haiti Earthquake Responders on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/tb/NewsandAnnouncements/earthquakes.htm>.

*Other infectious diseases*

Clinicians evaluating patients with recent return or arrival from Haiti should consider these infectious diseases and screen patients closely for symptoms. The following is a list of infections that should be considered in this population, with links to general information on each infectious disease:

*Other bacterial diseases*

Diphtheria: [http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/diphtheria\\_t.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/diphtheria_t.htm)

Leptospirosis: [http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/leptospirosis\\_t.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/leptospirosis_t.htm)

Typhoid: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbook/2010/chapter-2/typhoid-paratyphoid-fever.aspx>

*Mosquito-borne diseases*

Dengue:

[http://www.cdc.gov/dengue/resources/Dengue&DHF%20Information%20for%20Health%20Care%20Practitioners\\_2009.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/dengue/resources/Dengue&DHF%20Information%20for%20Health%20Care%20Practitioners_2009.pdf)

Malaria: <http://www.cdc.gov/malaria/pdf/clinicalguidance.pdf>

*Parasitic disease*

Lymphatic Filariasis:

[http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/parasites/lymphaticfilariasis/factsht\\_lymphatic\\_filar.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/parasites/lymphaticfilariasis/factsht_lymphatic_filar.htm)

*Viral disease*

Hepatitis: [http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/Resources/Professionals/PDFs/ABCTable\\_BW.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/Resources/Professionals/PDFs/ABCTable_BW.pdf)

*Anthrax*

Note: Anthrax occurs in Haiti; transmission is primarily by direct contact with infected animals or with contaminated products from infected animals. Cases of cutaneous and inhalation anthrax have been reported among the local population. For more information go to:  
<http://emergency.cdc.gov/agent/anthrax/diagnosis/>.

All suspected or confirmed cases of the diseases noted above (with the exception of leptospirosis) are required to be reported to the local health department (LHD). If there are difficulties reaching the LHD, the provider should contact the NYSDOH. During business hours, call 518-473-4439; after hours, call 1-866-881-2809.

If school officials, taking into account the totality of the circumstances, determine that an articulable and significant threat exists to the health or safety of a student or other individuals, they may disclose information to the appropriate officials, without consent, who need the information to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals. Public health department officials may be considered “appropriate parties” under this exception, even in the absence of a formally declared health emergency. Typically, public health officials and trained medical personnel are among the types of appropriate parties.

An educational agency or institution is responsible for making a determination whether to make a disclosure of personally identifiable information on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the totality of the circumstances pertaining to the threat. If the school district or school determines that there is an articulable and significant threat to the health or safety of the student or other individuals and that certain parties need personally identifiable information from education records to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals, it may disclose that information to such appropriate parties without consent. 34 CFR § 99.36. This is a flexible standard under which the Department defers to school administrators so that they may bring appropriate resources to bear on the situation, provided that there is a rational basis for the educational agency’s or institution’s decisions about the nature of the emergency and the appropriate parties to whom information should be disclosed. We note also that, within a reasonable period of time after a disclosure is made under this exception, an educational agency or institution must record in the student’s education records the articulable and significant threat that formed the basis for the disclosure and the parties to whom information was disclosed. 34 CFR § 99.32(a)(5).

### **Additional Resources**

New York State Education Department, Office of Student Support Services 518-486-6090  
*(For assistance with issues related to health services, child custody, residency and attendance)*

New York State Office of Mental Health Disaster Mental Health Planning and Response Resources:

[www.omh.state.ny.us/omhweb/disaster\\_resources](http://www.omh.state.ny.us/omhweb/disaster_resources)

Disaster Mental Health Planning and Response Resources Psychological First Aid

Education Initiative: [www.omh.state.ny.us/omhweb/disaster\\_resources/PFA](http://www.omh.state.ny.us/omhweb/disaster_resources/PFA)

National Child Traumatic Stress Network

[http://www.nctsn.org/nctsn\\_assets/pdfs/Earthquake\\_Caregiver\\_071008\\_Formatted.pdf](http://www.nctsn.org/nctsn_assets/pdfs/Earthquake_Caregiver_071008_Formatted.pdf)

[http://www.nctsn.org/nctsn\\_assets/pdfs/Earthquake\\_School\\_Personnel\\_071008\\_Formatted.pdf](http://www.nctsn.org/nctsn_assets/pdfs/Earthquake_School_Personnel_071008_Formatted.pdf)