

MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT: Grant schools access to a student's blood lead information in the statewide immunization information system in order to provide appropriate educational services

March 17, 2017

A03899 (Morelle) / S03941 (Hannon)

We are writing in support of the Morelle-Hannon bill to grant schools access to student blood lead information in the statewide immunization information system (NYSIIS) in order to identify children with lead poisoning and provide them with appropriate educational services. Health care providers and schools can easily access immunization information in NYSIIS; however, schools outside of New York City cannot view students' blood lead levels (BLLs) because the NYS law governing NYSIIS does not currently give them access. Bills A03899/S03941 will give all New York State schools access to this needed information.

New York State schools need access to student's BLL data in NYSIIS because:

- 1. LEAD AFFECTS LEARNING** - No safe level of lead has been found; even small amounts of lead exposure can adversely affect health, learning and behavior. Children with a history of lead exposure have a higher risk of developmental delays, IQ loss, ADHD symptoms, auditory processing problems, and learning difficulty than other children.
- 2. EARLY INTERVENTION WORKS** - Early educational interventions are crucial to help children overcome the neurocognitive deficits associated with lead exposure. In April 2015, a CDC expert panel released a new resource to guide schools regarding children who have had lead exposure: **Educational Interventions for Children Affected by Lead** (www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/publications/Educational_Interventions_Children_Affected_by_Lead.pdf). The CDC recommends that schools closely monitor children who have had a history of lead exposure and provide them with appropriate educational resources early on to overcome learning problems that may have resulted from this exposure.
- 3. THIS INFORMATION IS EASIER TO OBTAIN WITH NYSIIS** - NYS regulations require schools to obtain evidence of BLL testing when a child enrolls but do not currently provide schools with the means to collect this information easily. Similarly, all NYS Head Start programs have a federal requirement to obtain evidence of BLL testing for all enrolled children but they have difficulty obtaining it. The NYS Health Appraisal Form has space for a notation indicating if a child has been tested for lead and whether the blood lead level was elevated, but this data is usually missing or incomplete. If schools do not know which children have been exposed to lead, they cannot know which children's educational progress to monitor. With NYSIIS BLL access schools can obtain the entire history of BLLs for a child instead of using information only from the current healthcare provider, which may be incomplete.
- 4. OTHER PLACES HAVE HAD SUCCESS** - New York City and some states presently give BLL

access to schools through their local or state immunization information systems (immunization registries). No problems have resulted. Schools must adhere to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations regarding the confidentiality of this and other medical information.

Parents, healthcare providers and educators must work together to protect the children of New York State from the effects of lead exposure. Giving schools access to students' BLL data in NYSIIS will allow schools to focus efforts on assessing children's educational needs and initiating educational interventions as early as possible.

Please sign **(A03899/S03941) *Grant schools access to a student's blood lead information in the statewide immunization information system in order to provide appropriate educational services*** into law.