



Georgia Department of Human Resources • Division of Public Health • Stuart T. Brown, M.D., Director
2 Peachtree Street NW • Suite 15.470 • Atlanta, Georgia 30303-3142
404-657-2700 • FAX: 404-657-2715

MEMORANDUM

TO: District Health Directors
District Program Managers
District Immunization Coordinators
District Nursing and Clinical Coordinators
District STD Coordinators
District Womens Health Coordinators

FROM: Stuart T. Brown, M.D. 

DATE: May 4, 2007

SUBJECT: Vaccination of Certain Teens

Providers treating sexually active teen clients for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and providing family planning services in public health clinics have been unclear as to their authority to immunize these clients against vaccine-preventable STDs. There are currently three licensed vaccines that fall into this category: hepatitis B, hepatitis A, and human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccines. The Georgia Immunization Program supplies each of these vaccines to public health departments.

The “Consent of minor to medical or surgical care or services” law, O.C.G.A. 31-17-7, authorizes minors to consent to the provision of procedures and therapies relating to conditions or illnesses arising out of venereal diseases. Code section 31-9-2, “Persons authorized to consent to surgical or medical treatment,” authorizes any female, regardless of age or marital status, to consent to medical treatment for herself when given in connection with pregnancy, the prevention of pregnancy, or childbirth.

Public health clinics are, therefore, authorized to consider hepatitis B, hepatitis A, and HPV vaccination as part of the appropriate comprehensive services provided to sexually active teens seeking STD or family planning services. Clinical staff should refer to the Georgia Immunization Program Manual for specific vaccine administration guidelines and vaccine eligibility criteria.

The primary mode of hepatitis B and HPV transmission in the United States is sexual contact. Infants born to hepatitis B-infected mothers face an overwhelming risk of contracting the virus through perinatal transmission. Likewise, nonsexual routes of genital HPV transmission include transmission from a mother to a newborn baby. Hepatitis A infection may be acquired through

Vaccination of Certain Teens

any sexual activity that facilitates the transmission of the virus through fecal-oral contact. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends immunization against hepatitis B virus, and human papillomavirus as an appropriate part of the comprehensive treatment/prevention services provided to sexually active teens and adults. Hepatitis A vaccination is routinely recommended for all persons at increased risk for hepatitis A infection.

It should be emphasized that vaccinated teens should still practice protective sexual behaviors (e.g., abstinence, monogamy, limiting the number of sexual partners, and/or using condoms), since the vaccines will not prevent other STDs. In addition, receipt of the HPV vaccine does not negate the need for regular cervical cancer screening.

cc: Janice Carson, M.D., MSA
Rosalyn K. Bacon, M.P.H.
Michelle Conner, BSN, MS, MBA
Gala Hambrick, MPA
Linda Smart-Smith RN, MSN
Bonnie Cox, RN