



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Inter-Departmental Correspondence
County Manager



Date: July 3, 2012
Board Meeting Date: August 14, 2012
Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: John L. Maltbie

Subject: 2011-12 Grand Jury Response

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the Board of Supervisor's response to the 2011-12 Grand Jury report titled: Whooping Cough Immunization Rates- a San Mateo County Success Story.

BACKGROUND:

On May 23, 2012, the Grand Jury filed a report titled: Whooping Cough Immunization Rates- a San Mateo County Success Story. The Board of Supervisors is required to submit comments on the findings and recommendations pertaining to the matters under control of the County of San Mateo within ninety days. The County's response to the report is due to the Hon. Gerald J. Buchwald no later than August 21, 2012.

Acceptance of this report contributes to the Shared Vision 2025 outcome of a Collaborative Community by ensuring that all Grand Jury findings and recommendations are thoroughly reviewed by the appropriate County departments and that, when appropriate, process improvements are made to improve the quality and efficiency of services provided to the public and other agencies.

DISCUSSION:

Whooping Cough Immunization Rates- A San Mateo County Success Story

Findings:

Grand Jury Finding Number 1. California AB354, signed by Governor Brown on September 29, 2010, amended California Health and Safety Code §§120325 and 120335 to require all incoming seventh through twelfth graders to be immunized against pertussis or have permanent medical exemptions (PMEs) or personal based exemptions (PBEs) on file before the start of the 2011 school year.

Response:

Agree. Note PBE is Personal Belief Exception.

Grand Jury Finding Number 2. According to the law, students were to be prohibited from attending class at the start of the 2011 academic year until they had been vaccinated or submitted PME or PBEs. California SB614 extended the deadline for another 30 days.

Response:

Agree.

Grand Jury Finding Number 3. The County Health Officer extended the deadline a second 30 days and urged principals to be flexible and individualized in enforcing this requirement.

Response:

Agree.

Grand Jury Finding Number 4. The County Health Officer worked directly with the County Office of Education Superintendent to communicate requirements to all affected public and private schools.

Response:

Agree.

Grand Jury Finding Number 5. The County Health Officer delayed opening public immunization clinics until October 2011, after the State deadline extension expired, as a means of encouraging as many students as possible to see their private physicians for this immunization and other health matters. Two hundred to three hundred students used this service.

Response:

Agree. The exact number of student attendees was 164.

Grand Jury Finding Number 6. Schools were required to report their data through the California Public Health Department-managed Shots for School.org website by December 1, 2011. As of January 24, 2012, seven San Mateo County schools had not yet reported their data. A continuation high school was the last to report on March 6, 2012.

Response:

Agree.

Grand Jury Finding Number 7. The Shots for School.org website did not allow schools to report results until 100 percent of the students had a current Tdap immunization, a PME or a PBE on file, resulting in schools' inability to report data even if only one student of hundreds was outstanding.

Response:

Agree.

Grand Jury Finding Number 8. Individual school kindergarten immunization rate data are available by school on California's CDPH Immunization Branch website and on BayCitizen.org. The pertussis data obtained by the Grand Jury was obtained from CDPH pre-publication with the assistance of a San Mateo County Immunization Program official.

Response:

Agree.

Grand Jury Finding Number 9. The overall reported pertussis immunization rate for the County's incoming seventh through twelfth graders was 98.8 percent, a level that is sufficient to provide herd immunity and be considered a success.

Response:

Agree.

Grand Jury Finding Number 10. The CDPH Immunization Branch expected to publish results by County, and possibly line-by-line for school, by the end of April 2012.

Response:

Agree. Results are now available on California Department of Public Health (CDPH) website.

Grand Jury Finding Number 11. Four San Mateo County schools out of 130 reporting had PBE rates exceeding 10 percent, with three exceeding 25 percent. One additional school exceeded 10% exemptions due to two PMEs. All five were private, charter, or virtual (on-line) schools.

Response:

Agree.

Grand Jury Finding Number 12. One on-line school, California Virtual Academy of the Jefferson School District, accounted for 34 percent of all PBEs in the County (173 out of 511). Only 95 of its students are San Mateo County residents, with 26 of those filing PBEs.

Response:

Agree.

Grand Jury Finding Number 13. Adjusting the www.ShotsforSchools.org data to include only enrolled students that are San Mateo County residents reduces the County PBE rate to 0.8 percent from 1.1 percent.

Response:

Agree. Per 2011-12 7th-12th Grade Summary Report found in the CDPH website.

Grand Jury Finding Number 14. California is one of 18 states that allow PBEs for immunizations. AB 2109, submitted to the California legislature on Feb 23, 2012, would make it more difficult to claim a PBE by requiring “written statements from a medical practitioner stating that they (exemption requestors) have been informed of the risks and benefits of vaccines and the communicable disease they are said to prevent.”

Response:

Agree.

Recommendations:

The Grand Jury recommends that the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors direct the San Mateo County Public Health Department to:

- 1. Within 90 days of availability, post the San Mateo County pertussis immunization rates, by school, on its website, along with some targeted education interpreting the data and emphasizing the importance of immunizations. Alternatively, if the California Public Health Immunization Branch posts the data on its website, a link to that site, with appropriate background information, would be sufficient.**

Response:

San Mateo County will post the results on smchealth.org. A link will also be provided to the CDPH website where the summary report and grade data by school are listed. This

link will also include the Child Care Summary Report. The Immunization Coordinator will develop a targeted message emphasizing the importance of immunizations.

- 2. At the same time, similarly post data or a link to it for San Mateo County kindergarten immunization rates by school.**

Response:

San Mateo County will post the results on smchealth.org. A link will also be provided to the CDPH website where the summary report and grade data by school are listed.

- 3. By August 2012, evaluate and apply appropriate lessons learned from the success of the pertussis immunization program to the childhood immunization program to increase the immunization rate of kindergarten students in San Mateo County.**

Response:

1. San Mateo County will increase coordination efforts between San Mateo County Health System and Health Officer with the County Office of Education and the Superintendents,
2. Continue the biannual notification of school immunization requirements to public and private schools, and
3. Ensure that medical providers are included in the communication with school immunization requirements.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no Net County Cost associated with accepting this report.