

Pharmacists can give childhood shots, U.S. officials say

Associated Press

Pharmacists in all 50 states are now allowed to give childhood vaccinations under a new directive aimed at preventing future outbreaks of measles and other preventable diseases.

Alex Azar, the head of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, took the step using emergency powers he has during the U.S. coronavirus epidemic, which was declared a public health emergency. The directive announced Wednesday, August 19, will temporarily preempt restrictions in 22 states starting this fall.

The move is designed to help prevent vaccination rates from falling during the pandemic, Azar said.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has reported that orders for childhood vaccines from doctors' offices plummeted in late March and early April as their offices closed or saw fewer patients, raising concerns that vaccination rates would fall.

But a survey of pediatricians in May suggested that most offices were open and able to give recommended shots, and more than half were able to take on new patients if needed. Another CDC report from late last month noted New York City saw a rebound in kids getting their shots. National 2020 numbers from the agency



FILE - In this Thursday, Jan. 23, 2020 file photo, a patient receives an influenza vaccine in Mesquite, Texas. On Wednesday, Aug. 19, 2020, Alex Azar, the head of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, announced that pharmacists in all 50 states will be authorized to give childhood vaccinations this fall, due to a federal order that will temporarily preempt pharmacy restrictions in 22 states.

are not expected for another year.

"Especially as we approach the school season, it is critical that children have easy access to the pediatric vaccinations to enable them to get back to school as schools reopen," Azar said.

The Trump administration has been pushing for schools and day care centers to reopen, as part of an effort to allow parents to return to work and help revive the economy.

Currently 28 states allow pharmacists to administer vaccinations to children, Azar said. In 22 states, laws limit such vaccinations, including three states that prohibit pharmacists from giving immunizations to any

kids.

The authorization allows state-licensed pharmacies to administer childhood vaccines without a doctor's prescription. Pharmacists must first complete a training program, although many already have, Azar said.

The measure does not OK pharmacists to give shots to children younger than 3. Some of the most important childhood vaccinations are given to babies and toddlers, but pharmacists don't have the training or medical support to administer doses to young children, said Dr. Brett Giroir, the HHS Assistant Secretary for Health.

Most childhood vaccinations are given at doctor's offices and it's relatively un-

usual for kids to get vaccinations at pharmacies. In 2018, only about 7% of childhood flu shots were administered at pharmacies, according to CDC data. And it's even rarer for other childhood shots to be given at drug stores.

The American Academy of Pediatrics on Wednesday issued a statement criticizing the directive.

"Pediatricians' offices are open and safe. We have all necessary childhood and adolescent vaccines in stock with trained medical professionals who can administer them," said the organization's president, Dr. Sally Goza. "Rather than create an unnecessary alternative method to deliver immunizations to children, our federal government should invest in the one we have: pediatricians."

The American Pharmacists Association has been talking with federal officials about expanding services that its members can provide during the pandemic, said Mitchel Rothholz, the organization's chief of governance and state affiliates.

"I wouldn't say we initiated" the idea of gaining federal authorization to vaccinate children, he said. "It was part of ongoing conversations going on with decision makers, both at the federal and state level."

*Governor Reeves

(Continued from page 1.)
Monday, August 31 at 8:00 AM.

"I know it's a topic that we constantly get questions about. It's something that's been polarizing around the country—some conferences have opted not to make any effort to play. Some states have not yet put out their plans," said Governor Tate Reeves. "This is an effort, which we worked closely with the universities on, to set a floor. We took their joint recommendations, and with a little work we put this plan together. This is the minimum that each school is required to do this fall, to keep players and spectators safe while allowing college football to occur."

Under Executive Order No. 1519, bowl seating is limited to no more than 25% of seating capacity while maintaining six feet distance between households, with limits on club areas and suites as well. Additional social distancing measures include:

- Everyone over the age of 6 must wear masks as they enter/exit and throughout the stadium, unless they are seated. Masks are strongly encouraged while seated.
- Game day events such as tailgating and rallies outside the stadiums are prohibited.
- Individuals allowed on the sidelines are limited to those essential for the game.

• Concession stands are open, though grab-n-go food and drink options are strongly encouraged.

• All transactions should be contactless and touchless, such as mobile ticketing and cashless concessions.

Winona aldermen consider removing Confederate statue

Associated Press

Some Mississippi citizens are anonymously asking for a Confederate monument to be removed from outside a city library.

The statue is by the Winona-Montgomery County Library. The Winona Board of Aldermen met to discuss the statue Thursday but took no action on the request, WCBI-TV reported.

Mayor Jerry Flowers said he plans to research who owns the monument and report back to the board on Sept. 1.

Several Mississippi cities and counties have voted to remove monuments in the past two months amid national discussion over racial injustice. Others have rejected requests.

Entire fourth grade class in Mississippi sent to quarantine

Associated Press

An entire fourth grade class in Mississippi is in quarantine after a student and more than half of a school's fourth grade teachers tested positive for coronavirus.

Lafayette County School District Superintendent Adam Pugh told The Associated Press on Monday, August 24, that the district notified the families of more than 200 fourth grade students at Lafayette Upper Elementary School to quarantine for two weeks over the weekend. One student and six out of 10 or 11 total fourth grade teachers have tested positive for the virus, and most of the rest of the fourth grade teachers were exposed, he said.

"We don't have enough staff to cover our entire fourth grade class in-person, so we had to send everybody home, to do virtual lessons," he said.

Lafayette County School District teachers returned to campus on Aug. 3, and students returned to school on Aug. 5. They have reported nine total cases among staff

members district-wide and only one case in a student - the one at Lafayette Upper Elementary School.

Pugh said the school is in the midst of contact tracing investigations to figure out whether those who have tested positive for the virus were exposed at school or outside of school.

"I don't know why it's just our fourth grade teachers, I can't answer that question at this point, but we are doing everything we can to mitigate the spread and keep our students and faculty as safe as we can," he said. "By teaching them virtually for two weeks, we are trying to separate our teachers and our students."

Pugh said the district has posted new cases as they are reported on Facebook in an effort to be transparent. School districts in Mississippi are required to report new cases of coronavirus to the Mississippi State Department of Health, but not to the public.

Since returning to school in-person for the school year, the district's student

body has been operating on a split schedule, with only half of the student body in the classroom on any given day. The entire district community was meant to return to school together for the first time on Monday. However, Pugh said that date has now been extended to early September.

The Lafayette County School District has already experienced one loss amid the coronavirus pandemic. Middle school teacher and assistant high school football coach Nacoma James died in early August after quarantining with coronavirus symptoms. He was working with student-athletes to train throughout the summer, but was quarantining when classes started.

Pugh said the district has been trying to find ways to remember James as the school year progresses. He loved wearing bow ties, and some staff have been wearing those to work in his honor. His football team is having a scrimmage Friday night, and James will be on everyone's minds, Pugh said.

SPECIAL ELECTION - HOLMES COUNTY CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT NOVEMBER 3, 2020 QUALIFIED ELECTORS OF DISTRICT 3 PICKENS, GOODMAN, EBENEZER & COXBURG

AUGUST 5, 2020 QUALIFYING PERIOD BEGINS FOR HOLMES COUNTY CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT 3 - SPECIAL ELECTION

The first day qualifying period begins for Office of School Board is August 5. The first day August 5 - candidates may file petitions and/or qualifying statements for the Office of District 3 Holmes County Consolidated School District 3. (MS Code Annotated 37-5-9, 37-J-211J 37-7-225, 37-7-711).

SEPTEMBER 4, 2020 QUALIFYING DEADLINE, 5:00PM FOR HOLMES COUNTY CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT 3 - SPECIAL ELECTION

The candidates qualifying deadline for the Office of School Board - District 3, Holmes County Consolidated School District. is September 4, @ 5PM. (MS Code Ann 37-5-9, 37-7-211, 37-7-225, 37-7-711).

IF QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT THE CIRCUIT CLERK'S OFFICE @ Telephone:834-5028.

Submitted by, Earline Wright-Hart, Circuit Clerk