

# Examining the Impact of Suspensions on Immunization Practices in Day Care Children

**Type of Project:** Research  
**Organization:** Brant County Health Unit (BCHU)  
194 Terrace Hill Street,  
Brantford, ON, N3R 1G7

**Project Coordinator:** Ms. Jill Fediurek  
Infectious and Vaccine Preventable Diseases Program Manager  
519-753-4937 extension 295  
JFediurek@bchu.org



## Objectives:

1. To examine the reasons why day care children have an incomplete recorded immunization status and whether reasons relate to a failure of children to be immunized or a failure to report immunization records to the health unit.
2. To examine if reasons for incomplete recorded immunization differ for vaccines which are enforced versus not enforced by suspension.

**Target Audience:** Parents

**Project Summary:** In order to ensure compliance with Ontario's Day Nurseries Act (DNA), the Brant County Health Unit assesses immunization records of children enrolled in licensed day cares on a monthly basis. Children attending licensed day cares are suspended if they have an incomplete recorded immunization status for diphtheria, pertussis, polio, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella and Haemophilus influenzae type b. While vaccination for pneumococcal disease, meningococcal disease and varicella is also recommended, it is not enforced by suspension.

Immunization records of day care children who had received suspension orders during November, 2007 to February, 2008 were examined. The primary outcome of interest was actual immunization status prior to the suspension date for each antigen. Using the immunization date, children were categorized for each vaccine according to whether they had a complete or incomplete immunization status prior to the suspension date. Complete immunization status prior to the suspension date indicates a failure to report immunization records to the health unit, while an incomplete immunization status indicates a failure to immunize. Descriptive statistics were computed.

**Planned Completion Date: December 2008**

## Outcomes:

One hundred and thirty-five suspension orders were issued between November 2007 and February 2008. Sixteen children were withdrawn from day care during the study period, resulting in a final sample size of 119. Twenty-seven percent did not report any records for at least one non-enforced vaccine. Of those who reported vaccine records, the majority had complete immunization status prior to the suspension date ranging from 57% to 69% for each of the enforced vaccines, and 53% to 62% for each of the non-enforced vaccines.

Results indicate that an incomplete recorded immunization status is often due to failure to report records to the health unit, rather than a failure to immunize. This finding was true for both the enforced and non-enforced vaccines. Coverage of the enforced vaccines is higher than public health records had indicated; however coverage of the non-enforced vaccines is unclear as some children did not submit records to the health unit. Future efforts should focus on improving vaccine record collection, particularly for vaccines not enforced by suspension.