

CIRnews

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Citywide Immunization Registry, New York City Department of Health

We help you call the shots!

The staff at the CIR would like to extend our sincerest sympathies to all who were affected by the tragic events of September 11. We recognize that this has been a difficult time for everyone, and we have worked hard to support the critical services your offices provide.

Though our office building was closed for almost two weeks, the Registry continued to operate as usual. Since the database was physically housed in Long Island, system functions were not immediately affected. While we are now back in our offices and resuming our work, we had no phone service for over seven weeks. Standing true to our commitment to serve as a public health resource, ongoing access to patient immunization records was made possible through the use of a temporary phone number and e-mail.

Good news!

The CIR phone number is back in service! Call **212-676-2323** for immunization records.

New Form!

If you use *Immunization Registry Reporting Form (Imm 30A)*, you will soon receive an updated version ("Rev. 8/01" in the upper-left corner). **Please discard all older versions and begin using the new forms immediately.**

Free Training at Your Office!

Have our staff train yours in reporting and retrieving Registry immunization records via personal computer and modem. Call us at 212-676-2323 to schedule a training at your office.

Health care providers were alerted to this temporary number through a fax sent to every immunization provider in New York City and through alerts posted on our website.

The lack of phone service meant that we ourselves could not connect to the CIR database, which prevented us from being able to do the work of maintaining and assuring data quality. To solve this problem, the database was physically

moved from Long Island to our offices in Lower Manhattan. Unfortunately, this move did disrupt online provider access to the CIR since we had no phones, and therefore no dial-up access. We have worked very hard to re-establish online access to the database, and it is now up and running. Providers can again access children's records by using a computer and modem, or by calling us at 212-676-2323. We thank you for your patience and are happy to continue to help you call the shots.

Our Mission: To improve the immunization status of all NYC children by consolidating immunization information and sharing it with health care providers, families, and agencies concerned with children's health.

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Rudolph W. Giuliani
Mayor
City of New York



Neal L. Cohen, M.D.
Commissioner
Department of Health

Quarterly Feature

Dr. Hady Oghia

Staff at Dr. Oghia's office take New York City's reporting mandate very seriously. Mary Peiser, Medical Assistant, works hard to ensure that all immunizations given are reported within 14 days of administration, as indicated in the Health Code.

On average, Dr. Oghia vaccinates 20 patients a week. If the patient already has a record in the CIR, Ms. Peiser inputs information about new shots directly into the CIR using a computer and modem to dial-in to the online application. When Dr. Oghia sees a patient for the first time, Cathy Giummo and Debbie Vafiadou report the information using the paper reporting forms. Ms. Peiser says that she finds the online system "much easier and faster to use than paper forms." She also finds the system extremely beneficial. For instance, if Dr. Oghia sees a new patient who does not have his or her immunization record, the staff either looks up the record using the online application or calls the CIR. Ms. Peiser noted the usefulness of the CIR for obtaining immunization histories for new patients, saying "sometimes you send a release form to a doctor's office and you never receive the information."



L-R: Debbie Vafiadou, Mary Peiser and Cathy Giummo

The CIR staff thanks Dr. Oghia and staff for all of their hard work and commend them on their dedication to their patients. Their support and continued commitment to the work of the CIR is truly noteworthy.

It's time you got to know us!

This new feature gives you a "behind the scenes" glimpse of the various individuals working to help you call the shots. Staff members featured here have contributed to the CIR in different ways.

Marta Kowalska has been a valuable member of the CIR staff since July 2000, and is one of the five College Aides who work part-time at the CIR. She successfully balances her academic and work responsibilities, and is a 4th year student at City College of New York where she majors in Biology. Marta plays a very important role in responding to telephone requests from physicians and parents for children's immunization records. She also plays an important role in maintaining the accuracy of the information in the CIR.

Working with Dr. Kopec-Schrader on the analysis of data reported electronically, Marta identifies

Marta & Helena



The Office of Dr. Joan Short

Dr. Joan Short's office, located in Staten Island, is typical of a bustling pediatric office. With the walls covered with pictures of patients as they grow up, there is no question that a lot of immunizations are given in this office. Dr. Short and her staff administer approximately 50 immunizations per week to children age seven and younger. Keeping the CIR up-to-date is a priority for her staff, especially nurse manager and office manager Eileen Duffy, RN.

Ms. Duffy has taken the lead on reporting immunizations to the CIR. She enters most of the immunizations given via the online reporting system, which she finds to be more time-saving than reporting on paper. She has also shown the other staff what information is vital in order for her to provide the most accurate record for each immunized child. Besides first name, last name, gender, and date of birth, Ms. Duffy sees the advantage of report-



L-R: Eileen Duffy and Dr. Joan Short

ing additional information such as mother's maiden name and date of birth. When conducting an online search or calling in for a child's record, this additional information, according to Ms. Duffy, can make all the difference in finding a child's record in a timely manner. If Ms. Duffy sees any corrections that need to be made to a child's record, she notes the correct information and faxes it to the CIR. This saves time for the office staff later on when they use the online system to generate official immunization records for school, camp, and daycare entry.

Dr. Short believes her great staff deserves all credit for her office's "Practice of the Quarter" award because of all the hard work they do in maintaining accurate immunization records. We at the CIR would like to thank Dr. Short, Eileen Duffy, RN, and the rest of the staff for their commitment to the Registry.

miscoded and missing information and conducts follow-up with health care facilities to clarify and correct reporting errors.

"Group work is very important." –Marta Kowalska

Marta says that she is "here to make everyone happy" and enjoys the satisfaction she feels retrieving a child's immunization history for a parent who is in dire need of information. She says she enjoys her work because it is part of a group effort to keep the CIR up-to-date. Thanks for all your hard work, Marta!!!