

**Mission:**

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



**Rick Scott**  
Governor

**Celeste Philip, MD, MPH**  
Surgeon General and Secretary

**Vision:** To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

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## FLORIDA DOH HEALTH ADVISORY Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria Evacuees Version 1.0, October 18, 2017

Evacuees leaving Texas, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands due to Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria have been arriving in Florida – and will probably continue to do so for some time. Many are children who have educational needs and may also have special health care needs.

- The Florida Department of Education has recommended that any child who is an evacuee not be denied school entry. Federal and state laws mandate that children who have relocated due to a natural disaster will be allowed to enroll in schools, regardless of whether they currently possess the required immunization documentation.
  - To facilitate this process, all evacuees enrolling in an educational facility should receive ***an exemption from presenting proof of immunizations to last a total of 30 school days***. This exemption is issued by a designated school official.
- The Florida Department of Health will assist providers who may be asked to provide documentation of vaccinations for evacuees. The Department has promulgated Emergency Rule 64ER17-5, Florida Administrative Code, which waives the requirement to use DH Form 680 and SHOT System for the school immunization record. Immunization providers may use the equivalent record provided by the U. S. Territory of Puerto Rico to meet the requirements of Rule 64D-3.046, Florida Administrative Code. The emergency rule allows use of the Puerto Rico Immunization Registry (PRIR) record as evidence of immunization for school admission, when signed by a practitioner licensed under Chapters 458, 459, 460, or 464, Florida Statutes. The PRIR may be accessed at <https://prir.salud.gov.pr/PRIRPRD/portallInfoManager.do>.
  - The Department will be sending additional information to public and private immunization providers on how to generate proof of an evacuee's immunizations status as soon as possible. Should you have any questions, please contact the Florida Vaccines for Children Program at [FloridaVFC@FLHealth.gov](mailto:FloridaVFC@FLHealth.gov) or 1-877-888-7468.
- In addition to vaccine-related issues, we remind providers to be cognizant of special health care needs and considerations that may pertain to children who are evacuees:
  - Consider testing children who are evacuees for lead. Exposure to dust from rubble or other storm-related debris could create new lead exposure hazards in children, contributing to permanent neurological damage.
  - Evaluate the risk of child evacuees and pregnant women for Zika virus exposure. The Zika virus is endemic in Puerto Rico and US Virgin Island. Contact your county health department if you have Zika testing-related questions.
  - Parents of children with special health care needs, including issues related to Zika virus infection, should contact Children's Medical Services at 1-855-901-5390 for information about available services.
- Reportable diseases should be reported to your county health department. For a complete list of reportable diseases, please visit [www.floridahealth.gov/DiseaseReporting](http://www.floridahealth.gov/DiseaseReporting). Information on contacting your county health department is available at [www.floridahealth.gov/CHDEpiContact](http://www.floridahealth.gov/CHDEpiContact).