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Date: April 28, 2020
To: All DCS Staff
From: Rachel Russell, Deputy General Counsel
Sarah Sailors, Deputy Director of Field Operations
Subject: COVID-19 Vaccinations for Youth 16-18 Years of Age
DCS-21-09

This administrative letter is intended to provide information to Department of Child Services (DCS) employees about COVID-19 vaccination eligibility as it relates to DCS youth who are 16 to 18 years of age.

COVID-19 is defined by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) as “a new disease, caused by a novel (or new) coronavirus that has not previously been seen in humans.” The CDC, through the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), has approved the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for those youth who are 16 to 18 years of age. The vaccination is two shots which are administered 21 days apart. DCS encourages youth to receive this vaccination.

For those youth who are post-TPR and 16 to 18 years of age, DCS staff should inform the youth they are eligible for the vaccine, including helping them find information about the vaccine at the Indiana Department of Health website, www.in.gov/isdh, and assisting them in signing up for a vaccination appointment on that website or by calling 211.

For those youth who are in-home CHINS and 16 to 18 years of age, DCS staff should inform the youth’s parent(s) about vaccine eligibility so a parent/child decision can be made. If a youth wishes to receive a vaccination and the parents are not agreeable, DCS should support the youth through a court order.

For those youth who are out-of-home CHINS and 16 to 18 years of age, DCS staff should attempt to locate and speak with the youth’s parent(s) to obtain consent for the vaccination. If parent(s) cannot be located, DCS can pursue a court order for the youth to receive a vaccination.

Thank you for supporting our youth and their health.

Sincerely,

A blue ink signature of Rachel Russell.

Rachel Russell, Deputy General Counsel

A blue ink signature of Sarah Sailors.

Sarah Sailors, MSW
Sarah Sailors, Deputy Director of Field Operations