



May 11, 2011

Alan G. Phillips, J.D.
P.O. Box 3473
Chapel Hill, NC 27515-3473

Dear Mr. Phillips:

Thank you for your letter of May 9, 2011 regarding the County's upcoming vaccination campaign and the contest to promote participation. I, certainly, can understand your concerns.

The school district was approached by the County Health Department to participate in its campaign to increase the number of adolescents in our community who receive the three vaccinations in question; Meningococcal, Tdap, and HPV. In addition, the Harrisons offered to provide an incentive for adolescents to participate in the vaccination program. My staff recommended that we support the County's "April Adolescent Immunization Month" activities.

On many occasions, we entrust the County Health Department to advise and give guidance to our school district about how we can best promote a healthy community. I recognize that there is controversy over the administration of vaccines, but in this case we were following the advice of professionals who know far more about health than we do.

I can appreciate your questioning of the County's contest through which students can win an ipod or ipad. As you point out, the decision to vaccinate or not should be made by the parent. Although the contest may place some slight pressure on parents to grant permission for their children to be immunized, ultimately, parents need to exercise their parental responsibility and make the decision that they believe is in the best interest of their child.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Neil G. Pedersen".

Neil G. Pedersen, Superintendent

Cc: CHCCS Board of Education