

Kids lacking vaccinations turned away from school

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By Kim Brown

LEE COUNTY - State law requires all school kids be vaccinated for deadly illnesses because they can spread easily if proper precautions aren't taken. And as thousands of kids headed back Monday, some were turned away for not having them.

Despite the warning a month ago, lines still formed and waiting rooms were jammed as hundreds of parents scrambled to get their kids' last minute immunizations at the Lee County Health Department.

"I kind of figured people would be here early in the morning trying to get their shots so they're kids can start school. But this is, this is a big turnout," said parent Ashley Whitfield.

She waited patiently Monday so her four-year-old daughter could get vaccinated. She said she didn't even know her daughter needed any.

"She's pretty much up to date on her shots, except for her four-year-old shots," Whitfield said.

New this year, four-year-olds are now required to have certain shots before pre-k.

"Parents needed, between the child's fourth birthday and the first day of school, to have their fourth polio vaccination and in recent years past they've had until age six to get that," said Diane Holm, with the Lee County Health Department.

Holm says the rush happens every year during the first week of school. And some kids could miss school for an hour to a few days.

"There's a limited number of staff and you just can't process that many people that fast," Holm explained.

Janine Hubbard and her son moved from out of state. They were told by the school he didn't have all the shots he needed because he had no proof.

"He's very upset about it because it's a big day for him. New school, new state, and he's kind of missing whatever the teachers are saying," Hubbard said.

But they did get good news after waiting an hour.

The health department called South Carolina to check his medical records and discovered he did have all of his shots after all. And he was cleared to go.