SAFETY ALERT

TO:

REGIONAL DIRECTORS
SCHOOL EDUCATION DIRECTORS
PRINCIPALS
WHS LIAISON MANAGERS
STUDENT SUPPORT COORDINATORS

SAFETY ALERT No 42

FURTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THE GENERAL USE EPIPEN® AUTO-INJECTORS AND ANAPHYLAXIS TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Safety Alert No 41 provided advice to schools about the management process for casual staff who have not completed mandatory training requirements for anaphylaxis and emergency care.

This safety alert has been prepared in response to additional questions from schools and individual staff. The alert deals with these specific issues:

- Appropriate setting for EpiPen Jr® as a general use adrenaline auto-injector
- Current issues for casual staff accessing anaphylaxis e-training to meet the Department’s training requirement
- The Department’s position in relation to emergency response for anaphylaxis when parents or carers request alternative approaches.

These issues are dealt with in the following frequently asked questions.

1. Shouldn’t we have an EpiPen Jr® auto-injector for our kindergarten and Year 1 students?

No. The Department sought specific advice on this issue from the Ministry of Health before issuing general use EpiPen® auto-injectors to schools. The Ministry of Health advised that “the 300 microgram EpiPen® is appropriate for kindergarten to Year 12 school settings and the 150 microgram EpiPen Jr® is appropriate for preschool settings.”

This advice is based on expert, clinical advice from the Ministry of Health.

As announced in December 2012, and in accordance with the Department’s updated First Aid Procedures, NSW government schools are required to have at least one 300 microgram EpiPen® auto-injector in their first aid kit. These schools should not
have EpiPen Jr® auto-injectors for general use. Only dedicated preschool settings are required to have an EpiPen Jr® as their general use adrenaline auto-injector.

In December 2012, NSW government schools were issued with a general use, 300 microgram EpiPen® auto-injector. Only those schools that had a preschool attached to their school were also issued with an EpiPen Jr® auto-injector for use in the preschool setting.

The Department has received a number of enquiries from primary schools, concerned that they should have a general use EpiPen Jr® auto-injector as well as a 300 microgram EpiPen®, for smaller students in the kindergarten area. Those enquiring have noted that the manufacturer’s information for the EpiPen Jr® auto-injector indicates it is suitable for children under 30 kilos in weight.

In an emergency situation, schools should first use the adrenaline auto-injector prescribed for the student if they have been diagnosed with anaphylaxis, but can then use the general use adrenaline auto-injector if required – please refer to Safety Alert No 35 for emergency response: Important Information for NSW Government Preschools and Schools concerning the emergency response for anaphylaxis.

PLEASE ENSURE YOU HAVE UPDATED YOUR FIRST AID PLANS, IDENTIFIED THE NEED FOR ANY ADDITIONAL EPIPEN® AUTO-INJECTORS AND PLACED YOUR ORDER THROUGH THE EMAIL ADDRESS EpiPen@det.nsw.edu.au.

2. Some staff have been unable to access the ASCIA e-training. Is there any flexibility around this requirement?

Yes. The memorandum Mandating of Training for Permanent, Temporary and Casual School Based Staff sets out the requirement for school staff to complete anaphylaxis training by the start of Term 1, 2013. Because of high numbers of staff trying to access the site, the ASCIA e-training has been temporarily overloaded. The Department is therefore extending the timeframe for school staff to have completed this training.

All staff must have completed the training by Monday, 4 March 2013.

If you have any questions or difficulty in completing this training please contact Kate Lovelace, Leader, Student Health & Wellbeing on (02) 9244 5289. Please do not contact the staff at the Nurse Educator Program as they will not be able to assist you. We thank staff for their patience in trying to access this site.

3. Should initial teacher education students from universities who are undertaking professional experience complete the ASCIA e-training?

Yes. Anyone who is in a school and has responsibility for supervising or supporting students in the school environment should complete the ASCIA e-training module. The Department has written to the universities to ask that they provide this advice to their students, promote access to the course and maintain a register of certified students. Commencing Term 3 2013, university students should have available with them the necessary information to confirm with principals that they have completed
the training. Principals should ask initial teacher education students to provide a copy of an up to date certificate on arrival at the school. Students who do not successfully complete this training (required every two years) and/or are unable to provide a certificate to a principal on request will not be able to undertake professional experience in NSW public schools.

4. The ASCIA e-training is now asking that a supervisor sign off on the training. Is this necessary?

The Department does not require your supervisor to witness that you have demonstrated use of the auto-injector prior to teaching at the school. You should however complete the course yourself and print off the certificate.

Where possible, casual staff should be given the opportunity to practice with the EpiPen® trainer that was provided to all schools in December 2012.

5. What should my response be if a parent proposes an alternative to the EpiPen® or Anapen® in an emergency situation?

Anaphylaxis is a life threatening condition and always requires an emergency response.

The emergency response protocol for anaphylaxis is set out in the Department’s Anaphylaxis Procedures for Schools and Safety Alert No 35, Important Information for NSW Government Preschools and Schools concerning the emergency response for anaphylaxis. Schools are to follow these protocols which have been developed in consultation with the Ministry of Health.

If schools are aware of any health care provider (or purported health care provider) who has provided alternative advice to parents, they should provide the Department with relevant details by emailing epipen@det.nsw.edu.au.

The following paragraphs can be used in formal responses to parents on this matter:

I understand that you may wish for your child to be provided with a different treatment. However the Department has established emergency protocols where a student is showing symptoms of anaphylaxis. The protocols are documented and include acting immediately to administer an adrenaline auto-injector, such as an EpiPen® or Anapen®, and contacting emergency services. This emergency protocol has been developed on the basis of clinical advice provided by the NSW Ministry of Health. Failure to follow the advice could have life threatening consequences.

To ensure the safety of students, all NSW government schools are required to implement this emergency protocol when required. I wish to advise you that I am unable to implement any other protocol.
Please refer to the Department's Anaphylaxis website for further information and updates. Further updates will be available from this site. Please contact the Work Health and Safety Directorate on telephone (02) 9244 5253 if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Marnie O’Brien
Director, Work Health and Safety
26 February 2013