

Medical Exception Request and Review Process

Background

In 2004 the United States Education Department (USED) shared guidance (<https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/edfacts/data-files/assessments-sy12-13-public-file-documentation-v2-1.doc>) with schools about students who are unable to participate in required state assessments because of a significant medical emergency. Per this guidance, students with a significant medical emergency do not have to be included in the state's participation rate; however, states must monitor which students are not required to participate in required state assessment. The Division of Accountability Services uses the following process to identify and monitor medical exception requests.

Medical Exception Request and Review Process

Step 1

Each year the Division of Accountability Services publishes the annual *Request for Testing Exceptions Based on Significant Medical Emergencies and/or Conditions* memo (located on the NCDPI website under Guidelines, Policies, and Memos, linked [here](#)). This memo provides schools with the guidelines and processes required for requesting a medical exception. Parents and guardians who have questions about whether their student meets the guidelines for a medical exception should review the annual memo (linked above) and discuss the specific circumstances with the school test coordinator. If necessary, the district test coordinator may assist in determining whether the school's application for a medical exception request is appropriate.

Step 2

If the district test coordinator determines there is a need to submit a medical exception request, parents and guardians should work with the appropriate school staff to provide all necessary supporting documentation to accompany the request. This documentation should address and explain the impact of the medical condition on the student's ability to participate in or access the test(s).

Some examples of acceptable medical documentation provided by parents and guardians (to the school) may include (from the current school year): statements of treatment or release from a medical facility, concussion forms, seizure logs, and doctor's notes. The supporting documentation provided must adhere to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). All documentation must be verified as applicable to the current school year. For life-long medical conditions, the submitted documentation must reflect the current school year and acknowledge the continued need for a medical exception request.

Step 3

All medical exception requests are securely submitted by the school to the NCDPI.

Step 4

Once a medical exception request is submitted securely to the Division of Accountability Services, these requests are reviewed internally by the medical exception review committee. This committee is comprised of educational professionals with backgrounds in one or more of the following areas: classroom instruction, state testing, writing Section 504 Plans or Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), and experience teaching students with disabilities, to include but not limited to students with visual impairments, deaf and hard of hearing impairments, and students with specific behavioral needs and behavior intervention plans. Additionally, some committee members have expertise teaching and supporting students on the occupational course of study (OCS) and students with significant cognitive disabilities.

The committee evaluates each request and supporting documentation to determine:

1. if the student can access the test based upon the supporting documentation provided;
2. if the demands of the assessment match the student's present levels of performance as indicated by a current (Section 504 Plan or IEP); and
3. if the **school** should be provided with a medical exception for the request.

Step 5

Once the medical exception committee has reached a decision it is securely communicated to the public school unit test coordinator. The following graphic representation outlines the steps of the medical exception request process.

