

Carlene Neels
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Myrtle Beach, SC 29579

Ms. Catherine Heigel, Director
SC Department of Health and Environmental Control
2600 Bull Street
Columbia, SC 29201

To all those concerned:

On Thursday, November 5, my granddaughter, of whom I have custody, had a 1:00 PM appointment for a flu vaccination. Because schools do not like to have class interrupted, I had to pick her up at the class change, causing me to arrive at the health department well before our scheduled time. I arrived at the Myrtle Beach Health Department at 12:08, filled out the appropriate paperwork, and proceeded to wait. I knew I was early, so I did not mind. However, my appointment time arrived and we were not called back-for a simple flu vaccination. My granddaughter made a comment about it was past time, and several other of the clients also started complaining. One lady, with 2 small children, said she had an 11:00 AM appointment (this was after 1:00) and had not been acknowledged since filling out her registration papers. Another client had come in and gone to the WIC counter, rang the bell for service to no avail, and finally went to the other window to inquire as to why no one had helped her yet. The reply she got was, "She's at lunch and no one else can work that counter." The client asked why she was given an appointment at lunch time then. After several others complained about waiting an hour or longer, about 6 people were called back for service.

At 1:30, my granddaughter and I were called to the window to sign the permission form for the vaccination. Why was this not given to me to sign when I checked in? It was another 15 minutes before we were called back to actually receive the vaccination, which took a total of 3 minutes to administer.

The crux of this problem is, she has Medicaid, which is why we had to go to the health department. Why do I have to take her to the Health Department to do this, when her primary care physician can administer it, as well as as any licensed pharmacist? Also, we are discouraged from taking a child out of academic learning time, but the hours of the health department are not conducive to this goal. It is a waste of resources for me to drive 10 miles and wait for almost 2 hours when I can go 1 mile to her physician or our regular pharmacy, and be done in 15 minutes or less. Your policy needs to be changed regarding this. More staff needs to be at the Myrtle Beach Health Department so there is not an excessive wait time, and this particular facility needs to be renovated or even replaced.

Sincerely, Carlene Neels

cc: Honorable Nikki R. Haley
Senator Luke Rankin
Representative Mike Ryhal