

## Vaccines for Children Provider Notice

Pennsylvania Department of Health,  
Bureau of Communicable Diseases, Division of Immunizations

**May/June 2020**

### **COVID-19: Updates for VFC Providers**

Providers can access updates on COVID-19 by clicking the following link:

<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/programs/immunizations/Pages/VFC.aspx>

In addition, please note these important bulletins that impact our providers:

- [Suspension of Immunization Site Visits During COVID-19 – Outbreak Guidance to Providers](#)
- [Temporary Provider Office Closures Due to COVID-19 Outbreak - Requirements for VFC and 317 Vaccines Storage and Handling](#)
- [Maintaining Childhood Immunizations During COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

Providers are also reminded of the following:

- Field staff will be resuming visits after protocol has been developed regarding PPE and other measures needed to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Our nurses will be calling to reschedule visits that were canceled and reaching out to other locations due for a visit.
- **Education Requirement:** The annual VFC education deadline has been extended to **June 30<sup>th</sup>**, due to the impact of COVID-19. All VFC Coordinators and back-ups are required to complete the 2020 training.

### **CDC: Schedule Changes and Guidance during the COVID-19 pandemic**

The COVID-19 pandemic is changing rapidly and requires different strategies to maintain clinical preventive services, including immunization. Please visit the following CDC page to review guidance for scheduling changes during this challenging time: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/hcp/schedule-changes.html>.

Providers involved with perinatal hepatitis B immunizations may find the section **“Interim guidance to prevent mother-to-child transmission of hepatitis B virus”** of special interest.

### **Secretary of Health, Dr. Rachel Levine: The Importance of School Immunizations**

During a recent pandemic update, Department of Health Secretary Dr. Rachel Levine stressed the importance of maintaining all required childhood immunizations. Dr. Levine shared her guidance on this issue, stating “Since the beginning of this global pandemic it has been difficult for parents to get their children to the pediatrician for well child visits and immunizations. It is very important for parents to continue with these checkups because of the important vaccines children receive at these visits, especially those required for children to return to school in the fall.

Unlike COVID-19 infectious diseases like measles, mumps, whooping cough, chickenpox, polio, already have reliable, effective and safe vaccines. Vaccines are a great way to protect yourself and protect your family from a number of serious life-threatening diseases. Vaccinations not only protect children- they protect our entire community, especially those with compromised immune systems who cannot get vaccinated.” For more information, please refer to this CDC article: [Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Routine Pediatric Vaccine Ordering and Administration](#).

### **How Medicaid and VFC Work Together**

If you are a Medicaid Provider, there are many aspects of Medicaid that you should be aware of and how Medicaid and the VFC Program work together. **By far the largest category of children eligible for the VFC program is Medicaid-enrolled children.**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has an informative primer detailing how these programs work together, located on their site: [How Medicaid and VFC Work Together](#).

### **Vaccine Education Resources: Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia**

The Vaccine Education Center at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) provides complete, up-to-date and reliable information about vaccines to parents and healthcare professionals. VFC providers can find numerous educational resources by visiting the CHOP [Vaccine Education Center page](#).

### **Provider Information Update**

Due to COVID-19, our typical re-enrollment process is suspended. In its place, a Microsoft Form will be emailed to provider sites that did not have the chance to complete their re-enrollment process the usual way. This form is forthcoming and will be used to update your provider information and demographics. This information is required, and the form should be completed as soon as possible when it is received. Failure to complete the Provider Information Update may impact your ability to order vaccines.

In anticipation, please ensure that all digital data logger (DDL) certificates are current and vaccine coordinators and back-ups have completed You Call the Shots Modules 10 and 16. Training certificates must be sent to the Program to receive credit for taking the course.

**Please add the Vaccines For Children email to your address book: [RA-pavfc@pa.gov](mailto:RA-pavfc@pa.gov)**