



Vaccines for Children Provider Notice

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

September 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 review this important information that impacts 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:

- During a compliance visit, a member of the site's billing team must be available at the site or via phone;
- New enrollments may be delayed based upon availability of staff due to COVID-19 priorities; and
- **Education Requirement:** The annual VFC education deadline was extended to **June 30th**, due to the impact of COVID-19. All VFC Coordinators and back-ups should have completed the required 2020 training. If training has not been completed, your ordering privileges will be suspended until the required training certificates are received. Training certificates can be sent to the VFC Central Office via fax to 717-214-7223 or email to Pimmunizations@pa.gov.

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

The COVID-19 pandemic situation 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.

Updated Requirements for Childhood Immunizations

Given the COVID-19 pandemic, there are risks and difficulties associated with requiring children to be immunized to enter and attend school. During last winter, spring and continuing to the present, preventive medical visits, including those associated with administering vaccines, have been postponed to mitigate the risk of spreading the COVID-19 virus. Therefore, many children in Pennsylvania have not obtained vaccinations on the appropriate schedule and may not have the immunizations required to enter and attend school in the fall of 2020.

To enable children to enter and attend school or an early childhood program without the required immunizations, with Governor Wolf's authorization as conferred in the March 6, 2020 Proclamation of Disaster Emergency, the department is temporarily suspending the regulations at 28 Pa. Code § 23.83, which provides the list of immunizations a child must have and the grades for which the child must have them; 28 Pa. Code § 23.85, which states that children who do not meet the requirements should be excluded and places certain duties on schools to verify that children with medical exceptions who are on a plan to get their immunizations actually obtain the vaccinations; 28 Pa. Code § 23.86, which requires schools to report to the department the numbers of vaccinations and children taking exceptions; and 28 Pa. Code § 27.77(b), which requires that a child currently enrolled in a child care program maintain updated immunizations in accordance with federal guidelines. The regulations are suspended for a two-month period after the beginning of the school year or the beginning of enrollment in an early childhood education program.

For the complete July 21, 2020 press release, please visit:

<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Guidance/Temporary-Regulatory-Suspension-Immunizations.aspx>

Please note that while this guidance allows for schools to temporarily suspend requirements, it does not require it. The department continues to encourage all providers to assist their patients in staying on schedule. Our hope is that while extra time can now be given, every child will still have the necessary immunizations, on schedule, and by the first day of school.

Provider Information Update

Due to COVID-19, our typical re-enrollment process is suspended. In its place, a Microsoft Form has been emailed to each provider site. This information is required and will be used to update your provider information and demographics. Please complete and submit the form by **October 31, 2020**. Failure to complete the Provider Information Update will impact your ability to order vaccines.

Please ensure that all digital data logger certificates are current and vaccine coordinators and back-ups have completed the *2020 You Call the Shots Modules 10 and 16*. Training certificates must be sent to the program to receive credit for taking the courses.

If certificates have already been provided for 2020, they do not need to be resubmitted. If certificates have not been received for a site, the Provider Information Update will not be processed.

Influenza Vaccine Return

Please remember that all expired/unused influenza vaccine for the 2019-2020 season must be returned **before** your site can receive vaccine for the 2020-2021 season.

Influenza Vaccine Anticipated Shipment Timelines

The below table indicates CDC's anticipated shipping timelines for the influenza vaccine pre-book doses.

****Please note:** The dates below indicate the anticipated receipt of vaccine from the CDC to Pennsylvania. Influenza vaccine will be shipped to the provider location as soon as it becomes available. Providers should allow a minimum of an **additional two weeks** for vaccine to be received at the provider location.

Manufacturer	Brand / Description	NDC	Estimated Shipping Percentages
AstraZeneca	FluMist® Quad	66019-0307-10	50% to be delivered by 9/29 , with remainder to be delivered by 10/15
GSK	Fluarix® Quad SYR FluLaval Quad SYR	58160-0885-52 19515-0816-52	50% to be delivered by 10/15 , with remainder to be delivered by 11/14
Seqirus USA, Inc	Afluria® Quad SYR Afluria® Quad SYR Afluria® Quad MDV	33332-0220-20 33332-0320-01 33332-0420-10	50% to be delivered by 9/20 , with remainder to be delivered by 10/25
	Flucelvax Quad SYR Flucelvax Quad MDV	70461-0320-03 70461-0420-10	
Sanofi Pasteur	Fluzone® Quad SYR Fluzone® Quad SDV Fluzone® Quad MDV	49281-0420-50 49281-0420-10 49281-0633-15	50% to be delivered by 10/14 , with remainder to be delivered by 11/28

Timing is subject to change based on factors such as production yields and the timing of vaccine lot releases.

Vaccine Borrowing

Please be reminded of the following guidelines regarding the borrowing of influenza vaccine:

Providers cannot borrow state-supplied seasonal influenza vaccine for privately insured patients. Providers may use private stock seasonal influenza vaccine to vaccinate VFC eligible children if VFC seasonal influenza stock is not yet available. Those private stock doses used on VFC eligible children can later be replaced as VFC stock becomes available. Replacement must be made within 90 days unless clinic can justify delay.

No VFC eligible child should be turned away due to lack of VFC vaccine. These children should receive private vaccine until VFC vaccine is available.

****Note:** Providers are **not** permitted to replace privately purchased influenza vaccine administered on VFC eligible children with VFC vaccine (when VFC influenza vaccine is unavailable) if they bill Medical Assistance (MA) for the vaccine cost.

This **one-direction borrowing** exception is unique to seasonal influenza vaccine and is a requirement of the CDC.

The following must be documented for every borrowed vaccine a patient receives:

- Vaccine name
- Private dose(s) borrowed
- Reason vaccine was borrowed
- Patient's name
- Patient's date of birth
- Date vaccine was administered
- Date vaccine was paid back
- Provider signature verifying accuracy and compliance with VFC requirements

To properly manage inventory and track influenza dose borrowing, VFC providers MUST:

- Maintain an inventory for VFC eligible children and a separate inventory for privately insured children;
- Manage private stock inventory correctly in order to replace any borrowed vaccine. Providers need to be certain any vaccine given is accurately accounted for;
- Be sure not to borrow more private stock vaccine than was pre-booked through your VFC influenza order;
- Replace stock with the same product when borrowing from private stock. List of VFC supplied influenza vaccines is available on the PA Division of Immunizations website; and
- Replace borrowed vaccine dose for dose.

Please refer to the VFC Provider Handbook for procedures regarding vaccine borrowing. Influenza vaccine is unique and only one-directional borrowing is allowed. Two-directional borrowing is allowable on all other VFC vaccines.

Providers are required to document all vaccine borrowing on the VFC Vaccine Borrowing Report, found in Section 6-D of the VFC Provider Handbook. The VFC Vaccine Borrowing Report must be kept at the provider site for review by an immunization nurse during VFC site visits.

Vaccine Management Plan

Fall is in the air! Now is a good time to review and update your site's vaccine management plan.

VFC providers are required to:

Develop and maintain a routine vaccine management plan, providing guidelines to ensure the vaccine cold chain is maintained. For this plan:

- Designate staff responsible for all functions of vaccine management;
- Assign functional responsibility for executing the plan; and
- Review and document personnel and functions annually.

Vaccine Ordering

Vaccine waste is the responsibility of the provider. Please do your part to help the VFC Program prevent vaccine waste!

Providers are responsible for ordering only the vaccine they scheduled to give to their patients. Excess ordering results in excess vaccine waste.

Provider Responsibilities

The VFC Program requires that all providers comply with CDC requirements as spelled out in the Pennsylvania Vaccines for Children Program Provider Agreement and the VFC Program website.

Providers are responsible to notify the Division of Immunizations regarding:

- Change(s) in hours;
- Change(s) in staff;
- Change(s) in site location;
- Change(s) in facility name;
- Change(s) in organization affiliation; and
- When the physician on the Program Provider Agreement leaves the facility.



Please remember to include your Provider Identification Number (PIN) on **all** correspondence and documents sent to the Vaccines for Children Program. The PIN assigned to your site is a unique identifier and must be used for all communications with the VFC Program. Please note this includes voicemails, faxes and emails.

Please add the Vaccines For Children email to your address book: RA-pavfc@pa.gov