

# SECTION 1 – VFC ELIGIBILITY

## Patient Eligibility Screening

Before administering a VFC vaccine to a child, the provider must question the child's parent or guardian to determine whether he or she is eligible for VFC vaccine, and document findings (Section 6-C).

**Children (birth through 18 years) are eligible for VFC vaccines if they meet at least one of the following criteria:**

- Are enrolled in Medicaid, i.e., children who have health insurance covered by a state Medicaid program;
- Are uninsured, i.e., have no health insurance;
- Are American Indian or Alaska Native; or
- Are underinsured. This includes a child who has health insurance but whose coverage does not include vaccines, or a child whose insurance covers only selected vaccines (VFC eligible for non-covered vaccines only).

**Note:** Underinsured children are eligible to receive VFC vaccine only through a federally qualified health center (FQHC), rural health clinic (RHC) or a state health center (SHC) under an approved deputization agreement. \*

\*This is the formal extension of VFC authority through a memorandum of agreement to provide VFC vaccine to eligible, underinsured children from a participating FQHC or RHC to another VFC-enrolled provider. Under this arrangement, the deputizing FQHC or RHC retains its full scope of authority as a VFC provider while extending the authority to deputized VFC providers to immunize underinsured children with VFC vaccine.

Children with health insurance that covers vaccines, and who fail to meet one of the previously mentioned criteria are **not eligible** through the VFC program, even when the insurance requires a deductible. There are no income restrictions imposed by the VFC program, as long as the child meets all other enrollment criteria.

## Insured Children

Children whose health insurance covers the cost of vaccinations are not eligible for VFC vaccines, even when a claim for the cost of the vaccine and its administration would be denied for payment by the insurance carrier because the plan's deductible (high

deductible plan) had not been met. Children with the Pennsylvania’s Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) are not eligible for VFC vaccine.  
 Covered benefits and VFC eligibility table follows:

VFC eligibility scenario: Child is insured and ...	Insurance Status	VFC Eligible
Has not yet met plan’s deductible	Insured	No
Plan covers all ACIP recommended vaccines but excludes certain products/combination vaccines	Insured	No
Plan covers only a portion of the vaccine cost and does not have Medicaid as secondary insurance	Insured	No
Plan covers only a portion of the vaccine cost and has Medicaid as secondary insurance	Medicaid eligible	Yes
Has not yet met plan’s deductible and has Medicaid as secondary insurance	Medicaid eligible	Yes
Has exceeded plan’s annually allowed number of provider visits or insurance doesn’t cover vaccines	Underinsured – Only through FQHC/RHC or deputized SHC	Yes
Cannot access health insurance due to being incarcerated	Uninsured	Yes

## Charges and Fees for Immunization of the VFC-Eligible Clients

Provider’s bill according to Current Procedural Terminology codes that are based on each vaccine (type of immunization) administered. Reimbursement through Medicaid varies by state. Some state Medicaid agencies reimburse a vaccine with multiple antigens at a higher rate than a single antigen vaccine. Some states limit the amount of administration fees reimbursed per visit. Please check with the state Medicaid agency to determine how the VFC administration fees are reimbursed. State Medicaid agencies cannot eliminate reimbursement of an administration fee because of how the vaccine is administered (i.e., injection versus orally administered). All Medical Assistance (MA) providers with billing/coding questions should contact the MA provider inquiry number at **1-800-537-8862**.

For non-Medicaid VFC-eligible children (i.e., American Indian/Alaska Native, uninsured and underinsured), the administration fee is based on vaccine dose, **not the number of antigens** contained in a vaccine dose. The administration fee charged to a non-Medicaid VFC-eligible child cannot exceed the maximum regional charge (**i.e., \$23.14 per vaccine**), except in universal-purchase states (Pennsylvania is not a universal-purchase state), and then only if certain conditions are met. However, "The provider will

not deny administration of a qualified pediatric vaccine to a vaccine-eligible child due to the inability of the child's parents to pay an administration fee." This requirement must be met by all VFC providers. Furthermore, the VFC legislation does not require providers to honor vaccine requests by VFC-eligible children who "walk-in" for immunizations only and are not established patients in their practice.

**No VFC-eligible client may be refused administration of a vaccine due to an accompanying adult's inability to pay an administration fee.**