



Division of Public Health Services

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JANICE K. BREWER, GOVERNOR
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July 27, 2012

Revised: January 30, 2013

Dear VFC Provider,

It is with regret that we announce important Vaccines for Children (VFC) policy changes that will affect all VFC providers, whether you are a private immunization provider, public provider, hospital or county health department.

Effective October 2012: Federal vaccine may no longer be used to immunize PRIVATELY INSURED children.

- ~~Hospitals will no longer be able to administer federal vaccine to privately insured children for the Hepatitis B birth dose and HBIG. Hospitals will need to purchase private vaccine and bill for reimbursement from insurance companies when immunizing privately insured children.~~

POLICY CHANGE: EFFECTIVE JANUARY 30, 2013, HOSPITALS CAN USE VACCINE SUPPLIED BY THE ARIZONA VFC PROGRAM FOR THE HEPATITIS B BIRTH DOSE FOR ALL INFANTS REGARDLESS OF INSURANCE STATUS.

- County health departments and other public providers, such as some fire departments, school programs and public clinics, will no longer be able to serve privately insured children, unless they have private vaccine stock and the ability to bill private health insurance companies for reimbursement.
- Since all other private providers in Arizona have not been using federal vaccine for insured patients, this policy change will not affect them.

Effective Spring 2013 (exact date to be determined): VFC providers must discontinue immunizing UNDERINSURED children in the spring of 2013. Until then, please continue immunizing underinsured children with federal vaccine. However, once our limited supply of vaccine for the underinsured is depleted (possibly around March 2013), the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) VFC Program will notify your practice (~~including hospitals and~~ all public and private providers) to immediately cease using federal vaccine in immunizing underinsured children. The exceptions are:

- Federally-qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and Rural Health Centers have authority to use VFC vaccine for underinsured children.
- County Health Departments will be able to use VFC vaccine for underinsured children if they are "deputized" by an FQHC or RHC, meaning that the county is given authority to provide VFC vaccine to underinsured children. Counties are currently deputized, but they must be re-deputized and we are hoping that this will occur by January 2013.

- A small number of other public or private providers may be selected for deputization by county health departments to help the counties serve as a “safety net” for immunizations. New deputization agreements will be established by December 31, 2012, for only this limited number of providers. All previous deputization agreements will be discontinued by December 31, 2012.
- **UPDATE: VFC enrolled hospitals for the hepatitis B birth dose and HBIG.**
- Beginning January 2013, no other providers than those mentioned above may be “deputized” to administer VFC vaccine to the underinsured.

When these vaccine policy changes are in place, Arizona will become a “VFC-only state,” in which federal vaccine will be used only on VFC-eligible children. The exception to this will be the universal hepatitis B vaccine available to VFC hospitals.

These vaccine policy changes are necessary because state vaccine funding was discontinued in 2009 and, currently, the federal vaccine budget is being significantly reduced. The federal policy changes are affecting all VFC programs nationwide, including Arizona.

We are notifying you now about these vaccine policy changes to give you time to prepare for purchasing any needed private vaccine and for educating your patients. Please see the enclosed policy summaries and definitions of “Insured” and “Underinsured” children. We hope these are helpful to you.

We realize that these changes are very challenging. We will assist you with questions and issues, as we all try to navigate these changes and ensure immunization coverage of our children to the best of our ability. We will continue to stay in touch with you, providing updates, frequently asked questions (FAQs) and other information.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Arizona VFC Program at 602-364-3642 if you have questions.

Sincerely,



Patty Gast, M.S.

Office Chief

Arizona Immunization Program Office

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Enclosures