



Division of Public Health Services

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JANICE K. BREWER, GOVERNOR
WILL HUMBLE, DIRECTOR

July 27, 2012

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 can 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.
- 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 (FQHC) and Rural Health Centers (RHC) 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.

- 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.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patty Gast". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Patty Gast, M.S., Office Chief
Arizona Immunization Program Office

Enclosures

PG:KS:ks



STARTING OCTOBER 2012, HOSPITALS, COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENTS AND OTHER PUBLIC PROVIDERS WILL NO LONGER BE ABLE TO IMMUNIZE PRIVATELY INSURED CHILDREN WITH FEDERAL VACCINE

Impact

Hospitals will no longer receive Hepatitis B birth dose and HBIG for privately insured children from the Arizona VFC Program. Hospitals will need to purchase private vaccine and bill for reimbursement from insurance companies when immunizing privately insured children. Hospitals are expected to continue providing the birth dose, although private providers should be prepared to provide the birth dose within 72 hours, if not already given in the hospital.

County Health Departments and all public VFC providers, such as several fire departments, school programs, and other public clinics may no longer use public vaccine for privately insured children. Privately insured children may fall through the cracks if turned away by private providers and sent to county health departments or other public providers only to be bounced back to private practice.

Insured children more than ever need to be given immunizations in their medical homes.

Resources

Pharmacies may vaccinate children 6 years of age and older with a doctor's prescription, except for influenza vaccine, which does not require a prescription. Pharmacies may bill insurance companies and/or charge the parent out-of-pocket.

Federally-Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and Rural Health Centers (RHCs) provide medical services, including immunizations. These health care centers will require children to enroll in their facility for comprehensive services.

Definition of Insured: Anyone with insurance that covers the cost of vaccine, even if the insurance includes a deductible or co-pay, or if 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 had not been met.

If you have any questions, please contact the Arizona Department of Health Services VFC Program at (602) 364-3642.



BEGINNING SPRING 2013 (ANTICIPATED IN MARCH), VFC PROVIDERS MUST STOP USING FEDERAL VACCINE TO IMMUNIZE UNDERINSURED CHILDREN, UNLESS THEY HAVE A CURRENT (JANUARY 2013) DEPUTIZATION AGREEMENT

Impact

The Arizona VFC Program will notify VFC Providers when they need to stop using federal vaccine to immunize underinsured children. We expect this to occur in March 2013, but this is just an estimated date at this time. Starting in January 2013, we will email you weekly updates on the status of our vaccine supply for you to use on underinsured children. Please keep immunizing underinsured children until you are told to stop.

Only Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), Rural Health Centers (RHCs), County Health Departments and a limited number of deputized providers may continue immunizing underinsured children with federal vaccine supplied by the Arizona VFC Program, starting in Spring 2013. Public Health is working with these providers to renew deputization agreements.

In Spring 2013, VFC Providers will need to purchase private vaccine and charge the undersinsured children out-of-pocket for immunizations or refer them to County Health Departments, FQHCs, RHCs, or deputized providers.

In Spring 2013, hospitals will no longer be supplied with Hepatitis B birth dose and HBIG for underinsured children. Hospitals will need to purchase private vaccine and charge undersinsured children out-of-pocket for immunizations, or refer them to County Health Departments, FQHCs, RHCs, or deputized providers.

Sending underinsured children out of their medical home for immunization may create barriers to immunization.

Resources

All County Health Departments will be able to provide VFC Vaccine to undersinsured children. County Health Departments may designate other public or private providers, on a limited basis, to assist them in immunizing underinsured children with VFC vaccine. These providers must accept non-established patients. If you are interested in becoming deputized, please contact your county health department or ADHS at 602-364-3642.

FQHCs and RHCs provide medical services, including immunizations, and specifically the underinsured. These health care centers will require children to enroll in their facility for comprehensive services.

Pharmacies may vaccinate children 6 years of age and older with a doctor's prescription, except for influenza vaccine, which does not require a prescription. Parents of underinsured children may be charged out-of-pocket.

Definition of Underinsured: A person who has health insurance, but the coverage does not include vaccines or a person whose insurance covers only selected vaccines. Children who are underinsured for selected vaccines are VFC-eligible for non-covered vaccines only. Underinsured children are eligible to receive VFC vaccine only through a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) or Rural Health Clinic (RHC) or under an approved deputization agreement.

Children with deductibles and co-pays are considered insured and NOT underinsured.

If you have any questions, please contact the Arizona Department of Health Services VFC Program at (602) 364-3642.