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JOINT INVESTIGATION LEADS TO ARREST OF PEDIATRICIAN FOR FRAUD



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Tallahassee, Fla.— The Florida Department of Health announced that its joint investigation with Office of the Attorney General's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit has led to the arrest of Dr. Ishrat Sohail for Medicaid fraud. During the course of the investigation it was discovered that Dr. Sohail had allegedly been administering Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program vaccines, which are intended for Medicaid and uninsured children, to patients with private insurance. It was also discovered that Dr. Sohail had allegedly administered partial doses of vaccines to patients while billing insurance the full cost of the vaccines. Partial doses of vaccine may not provide sufficient protection from potentially dangerous vaccine preventable diseases.

Upon reviewing the facts of the investigation State Surgeon General Dr. Celeste Philip has issued an emergency order suspending the license of Dr. Sohail to practice medicine in the state of Florida. Emergency actions are powerful tools that can be imposed when the department finds there is an immediate serious danger to the public health, safety or welfare.

The department regularly conducts site visits to VFC providers. In 2016, the department conducted a site visit to Dr. Sohail's practice and determined that she had administered two vials of VFC vaccines to non-Medicaid patients and billed private insurance companies. Based on this finding, Dr. Sohail was suspended from the VFC program for two months. Following the suspension, Dr. Sohail was placed on a corrective action plan which limited the VFC vaccines available to her. In late January, the department conducted an additional VFC site visit and found Dr. Sohail to be in non-compliance, finding partially used single-dose vaccine vials in the refrigerator. The department shared all site visit evidence with the Attorney General's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit to assist in their investigation.

Due to the suspension order, patients of Dr. Sohail will need to transition to an alternate pediatric primary care provider. The department is working with the Agency for Health Care Administration and health plans to notify all potentially impacted families. At this time, it is estimated that approximately 500 children may have been impacted.

Based on recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the department, if your child received vaccines from Dr. Sohail between 2016 and 2018, you should contact a new primary care provider to consider revaccination. DOH-Orange County is also available to assist with vaccination for those who have difficulty establishing care with a new provider.

There is also the possibility that Dr. Sohail did not follow best practices in maintaining the sterility of the vaccines she administered. If your child experienced a severe adverse reaction or infection

at the injection site of any vaccine administered by Dr. Sohail or her staff, please contact DOH-Orange epidemiology at 407-858-1485.

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