

MODULE

1

OVERVIEW

Immunization Section—Vaccines for Children Program

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MODULE 1: Overview

Introduction

The Immunization Section is a part of the Florida Department of Health, Division of Disease Control and Health Protection, Bureau of Communicable Diseases. The Immunization Section focuses on increasing immunization levels in Florida and decreasing vaccine-preventable diseases.

Mission:

To protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county, and community efforts.

Vision:

To be the Healthiest State in the Nation.

Values:

- Innovation—We search for creative solutions and manage resources wisely.
- Collaboration—We use teamwork to achieve common goals and solve problems.
- Accountability—We perform with integrity and respect.
- Responsiveness—We achieve our mission by serving our customers and engaging our partners.
- Excellence—We promote quality outcomes through learning and continuous performance improvement.

One way of accomplishing our vision is by using federal and state funds to obtain vaccines for distribution to eligible health care providers through the Florida Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program. This program is a federally funded program that provides vaccines at no cost to children who might not otherwise be vaccinated because of their inability to pay. The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 created the VFC Program as a new entitlement program, required as part of each state's Medicaid plan. The program was officially implemented in October 1994 as part of the President's Childhood Immunization Initiative. Funding for the VFC Program is approved by the Office of Management and Budget and allocated through the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMMS) to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Children who are eligible for VFC vaccines are entitled to receive pediatric vaccines recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).

Highlights of the VFC Program:

- Provides public-purchased vaccine for eligible children at no charge to VFC-enrolled public and private providers in all states, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.
- Provides all vaccines recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).
- Saves parents and VFC-enrolled providers out-of-pocket expenses for vaccine.

- Provides cost savings to states through bulk purchase of vaccine using CDC contracts at lower prices and eliminates state-to-state variations in price.
- Eliminates or reduces vaccine cost as a barrier to vaccinating eligible children.
- Reduces the practice of referring children for vaccination from the private sector to the public sector.

ACIP

What is the ACIP and what are its responsibilities?

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) has existed since 1964. Its original purpose was to provide advice and guidance on the most effective means to prevent vaccine-preventable diseases. In 1993, Congress gave the ACIP a unique statutory authority to determine the vaccines, number of doses, schedule and contraindications for the VFC Program and for the general population. The ACIP is the only entity in the federal government that has the authority to make such recommendations. The overall goals of the ACIP are to provide advice that will assist the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the nation in reducing the incidence of vaccine-preventable diseases and to increase the safe use of vaccines and related biological products.

The ACIP consists of fifteen experts in fields associated with immunization and infectious diseases, including the chair and eight non-voting ex officio members. The ACIP:

- A. Develops technical recommendations on vaccine use and immunization practices.
- B. Approves vaccines that the VFC Program will provide.
- C. Recommends immunization schedules that are in harmony with other advisory groups, such as the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP).

The ACIP process to add vaccinations or to revise the United States immunization schedule is lengthy and deliberate. It can begin two-to-five years prior to licensure of a particular vaccine. The ACIP also considers changes in the epidemiology of vaccine-preventable diseases. Workgroups headed by ACIP members work with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) staff and other consultants to examine issues around particular vaccines or disease epidemiology and present this information to the full ACIP membership several times throughout the year. Focused policy options, science, and other information supporting these policy choices are presented to, deliberated upon, and voted on by the ACIP in open public meetings.

Final immunization recommendations are published in the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) at: www.cdc.gov/mmwr/about.html, when approved by the ACIP and the Director of the CDC.

ACIP's Role in the VFC Program

The ACIP makes its immunization recommendations for the entire U.S. population and is legislatively linked to the VFC Program. Therefore, in addition to recommending vaccine use

for the general population, the ACIP also approves the specific recommendations for inclusion of a vaccine in the VFC Program. The ACIP publishes these recommendations as VFC resolutions. The ACIP issues resolutions by vaccine type following licensure and/or as recommendations for change in use. VFC resolutions passed by the ACIP form the basis for VFC Program policies on vaccine availability and use. After a VFC resolution is in place, CDC establishes contracts for vaccines available through the VFC Program. Providers must administer VFC vaccines according to the guidelines outlined by the ACIP in the VFC resolutions.

ACIP-Approved Vaccines and Biologicals Available Through the VFC Program

The following vaccines are available through Florida's VFC Program:

- Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Acellular Pertussis (DTaP)
- *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (HIB)
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Human Papillomavirus (HPV)
- Influenza
- Meningococcal Conjugate (MCV4)
- Meningococcal B Conjugate (MenB)
- Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR)
- Pneumococcal Conjugate (PCV13)
- Polio (IPV)
- Rotavirus
- Tetanus and Diphtheria (Td)
- Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Acellular Pertussis (Tdap)
- Varicella and MMR/V
- Combination Vaccines (Kinrix®, Pediarix®, Pentacel®, ProQuad®)

The following vaccines are available by request for high-risk clients only. Contact a VFC representative at 1-800-483-2543 for further information.

- Diphtheria and Tetanus (DT-Pediatric, county health departments only)
- Pneumococcal Polysaccharide (PPSV23, county health departments only)

The CDC's ***Vaccine Management, Recommendations for Storage and Handling of Selected Biologicals*** lists the guidelines and recommendations on each individual vaccine and is located at: www.immunize.org/packageinserts/.

For more information on the Florida VFC Program visit our website at: www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/immunization/vaccines-for-children/index.html.

Florida State Health Online Tracking System (Florida SHOTS)

Florida SHOTS assists VFC providers in managing their VFC inventory, completing their VFC orders, and documenting the VFC storage unit temperatures. In addition, it helps ensure that the required immunization records for childcare centers and school attendance are easy to locate, children's immunizations are up-to-date, prevents unnecessary duplicative vaccinations, and consolidates immunization records from multiple health care providers. The benefits of Florida SHOTS are:

- Produces the legal immunization record (*DH Form 680*) required for school and daycare center attendance.
- Consolidates immunization records from all providers into one record per patient.
- Immunization information is accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- The immunization tracking software never has to be downloaded or upgraded on your computer.
- Provides reliable immunization history for any child.
- Identifies patient's previously reported contraindications.
- Provides definitive information, reminders, recalls on immunizations that are due or overdue, and reduces paperwork.
- Generates immunization reports for managed care organizations.
- Provides current recommendations, information, and new vaccines.

For more information about the Florida SHOTS Program, call the toll-free telephone number at 1-877-888-SHOT or send an email to: FLShots@FLHealth.gov.

Immunization Section Contact Information

VFC Program

Phone: 1-800-483-2543

Email: FloridaVFC@FLHealth.gov

Florida State Health Online Tracking System (SHOTS)

Phone: 1-877-888-SHOT (7468)

Email: FLSHOTS@FLHealth.gov

General Information

Phone: (850) 245-4342

Email: Immunization@FLHealth.gov