



PA VFC Program News



Summer 2011

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2011-2012 Influenza Vaccine Ordering Has Begun

The Pennsylvania Vaccines for Children (PA VFC) Program is now **pre-booking** influenza vaccine orders for the 2011-2012 influenza season. In preparation for the 2011-2012 influenza season, the PA VFC program mailed the 2011-2012 “*Influenza Vaccine Order Form*” to approved health care facilities during the month of June. The current Influenza Vaccine Ordering Form is located at <http://www.health.state.pa.us/vfc>, under the Vaccines for Children link.

The influenza vaccine will be distributed to State Health Centers, County-Municipal Health Departments, Federally Qualified Health Centers, Rural Health Clinics, private PA VFC providers and other Department approved public provider sites. Distribution of the influenza vaccine is expected to begin in September or October 2011.

If you did not receive your “*Influenza Vaccine Order Form*” and do not have access to the Department’s website, contact the PA VFC Program at our toll-free line 1-888-646-6864 to request an influenza order form. Influenza orders must be received by **July 31, 2011**. **Completed order forms for influenza vaccine may be emailed to pimmunizations@state.pa.us or faxed to (717) 441-3777.**

Influenza vaccine obtained through the Department may only be provided to those persons six months of age and older who have no access to vaccine from other sources and, because of age or underlying medical conditions, are at risk for complications of influenza.

Each person receiving the influenza vaccine must be provided an Influenza Vaccine Information Statement (VIS), which is located on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis. The most recent Influenza VIS is typically posted on the CDC website by July.

Please direct any questions regarding influenza vaccine ordering to Nancy Mumper and clinical questions to Misty Hall at (717) 787-5681.

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2011 PA VFC Program Satisfaction Survey

The “Pennsylvania Vaccines for Children (PA VFC) Program Satisfaction Survey” was emailed or mailed to a total of 1,576 PA VFC providers during the month of April 2011. The survey tool is part of the PA VFC Program’s continuous improvement process, in which survey responses are collected and methodically analyzed for the purpose of enhancing the PA VFC Program. Feedback obtained from respondents is currently being used to improve service delivery in identified program areas.

On May 2, 2011, a total of 543 PA VFC providers completed surveys online or through mailed hardcopy surveys. The 543 completed surveys represented a response rate of 34.5 percent, with 420 or 77 percent completed online and 123 or 23 percent completed through hardcopy surveys. The survey asked a total of 43 questions, and overall, 98 percent of providers indicated they agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the PA VFC program.

The program satisfaction survey covered five core business functions critically important to the PA VFC Program’s mission. The five core business functions identified as having a significant effect upon provider satisfaction are: Vaccine ordering and shipping, Customer Service/Provider Inquiries, Information Dissemination and Exchange, Quality Assurance and Pennsylvania Statewide Immunization Information System (PA-SIIS).

Principal findings from the 543 completed surveys indicated the following:

- Ninety-eight percent of providers indicated they agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied overall with the PA VFC program.
- Providers expressed a 99 percent level of satisfaction with the condition of vaccine upon arrival.
- Ninety-nine percent of respondents indicated they agreed or strongly agreed they were satisfied with requirements regarding proper vaccine storage and handling.
- Ninety-four percent of providers indicated they agreed or strongly agreed they were satisfied with “the vaccine ordering and distribution process”.
- The overall customer service satisfaction indicated by respondents was 97 percent (satisfied to very satisfied).
- Twenty-seven percent of respondents indicated they didn’t know how to order immunization-related educational materials from PA VFC.
- Thirty-six percent of respondents indicated they currently use Pennsylvania Statewide Immunization Information System (PA-SIIS). Sixty-eight percent of providers indicated they were satisfied to very satisfied with PA-SIIS online training, 77 percent with PA-SIIS Help Desk and 79 percent with onsite PA-SIIS training.
- Respondents indicated a low level of satisfaction with the following forms of communications, Toll-Free Outgoing Message Line (43 percent), Fax updates (69 percent), PA VFC Website (75 percent) and E-mail updates (77 percent). The low rate can probably be explained by respondents indicating at a high rate that they “Don’t Know” how to rate their satisfaction with communications.

The PA VFC Program Satisfaction Survey’s “Executive Summary” is available at the PA VFC website under the “What’s New” link at <http://www.health.state.pa.us/vfc>.

Frozen Vaccine Transporting & Storage

Effective June 6, 2011, Merck is no longer transporting frozen vaccines using dry ice. Use of dry ice may subject the products to temperatures colder than -58°F (-50°C).

In keeping with this announcement, the PA Department of Health's Division of Immunizations no longer recommends the transporting of frozen vaccine on dry ice. The use of any vaccine exposed to temperatures other than those recommended by the manufacturer is considered "Off Label" use, and the manufacturer must be contacted to ascertain whether or not the vaccine is acceptable for use. Frozen vaccines will now be packed for shipping with six refrigerant packs for up to 80 doses per shipping container. Refrigerant packs can be disposed of in regular trash. The vaccine shipping containers are packed according to Merck guidelines.

Per the "Epidemiology and Prevention of Vaccine Preventable Diseases," 12th Edition, Revised May 2011 (or The Pink Book), pages 321-322, all varicella-containing vaccines should be stored in a continuously frozen state at the manufacturer recommended freezer temperature until administration. Varicella and zoster vaccines should be stored at +5°F (-15°C) or colder. The combination vaccine measles, mumps, rubella and varicella (MMRV) should also be stored frozen between -58°F and +5°F (-50°C to -15°C). If varicella and zoster vaccines are stored in the freezer with MMRV, keep the temperature between -58°F and +5°F (-50°C to -15°C).

The CDC strongly discourages the transport of varicella-containing vaccines to off-site clinics. All varicella containing vaccines are fragile. If these vaccines must be transported to an off-site clinic, the vaccine manufacturer recommends they be transported and stored at refrigerator temperatures, between 35°F and 46°F (2°C to 8°C), for no more than 72 continuous hours prior to reconstitution. Vaccine stored between 35°F and 46°F (2°C to 8°C) that is not used within 72 hours of removal from the freezer should be discarded. Varicella-containing vaccines cannot be refrozen.

The complete news release can be access at:

[https://www.merckvaccines.com/Professional-Resources/Documents/announcements/
New_Shipping_Package_for_VARIVAX_and_ZOSTAVAX.pdf](https://www.merckvaccines.com/Professional-Resources/Documents/announcements/New_Shipping_Package_for_VARIVAX_and_ZOSTAVAX.pdf)

17th Annual Pennsylvania Immunization Conference (PIC)

The 17th Annual Pennsylvania Immunization Conference (PIC) was held on Thursday June 30, 2011 at the Lancaster Host Resort & Conference Center. Opening remarks were delivered by Eli N. Avila, MD, JD, MPH, FCLM, Secretary of Health, Pennsylvania Department of Health. Donna Weaver, RN, MN, of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) delivered the Keynote Address. This year's conference registered a record number of approximately 350 attendees.

The conference is organized by the Pennsylvania Immunization Coalition (PAIC) and the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Division of Immunizations. PIC is co-sponsored by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, the Pennsylvania Immunization Coalition, the PA Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the PA Academy of Family Physicians, in collaboration with the Penn State College of Medicine. The conference brings immunization partners together to share information and discuss current issues for the purpose of improving immunization rates in Pennsylvania.

Vaccine Waste: Don't let it happen in your office

Protecting the viability of federally-funded vaccine is the shared responsibility of everyone, from the time vaccine is manufactured until the time it is administered. During the first quarter of 2011, the PA VFC program reported vaccine waste due to storage and handling errors in the amount of approximately \$414,154 worth of federally-funded vaccine. No one likes dealing with the issue of vaccine waste, but this is a huge loss of vaccine, not only from a financial standpoint, but also from its intended purpose of protecting children from disease.

Eighty percent, or \$332,358, of the total vaccine amount reported wasted in the first quarter of 2011 was a result of vaccine expiring before it could be used. Examples of vaccine waste include out-of-range temperatures, not rotating stock based on expiration date, storage unit failure and power outages.

Below are steps to help minimize vaccine waste and the program's financial liability of replacing those doses.

- Order appropriate amounts of vaccine based on current inventory and usage. We suggest you order within your Economic Order Quantity (EOQ) schedule, as well as keep at most a five week supply of vaccine in inventory.
- Be aware of your expiration dates. Part of ordering is to record doses on hand and expiration dates of all publicly-funded vaccines. If you have vaccine within three months of expiration and know that it will not be used, it's time to contact the PA VFC program.
- Rotate vaccine stock. Again, know your expiration dates and be sure staff is using the product with the earliest expiration date.
- Proper storage. All office staff should know the proper procedure for receipt of vaccine. Vaccine shipments are sent in containers that are marked perishable and should be stored immediately in an appropriate refrigeration unit.
- Product changes. Providers must use up all vaccine inventory in stock before switching to another product.

Please take a moment to verify that your PA VFC inventory is not set to expire. If you have vaccine set to expire and believe the vaccine will expire before it can be used, please contact your PA VFC Immunization Nurse (locations in PA VFC Provider Handbook, Section 5) or at <http://www.health.state.pa.us/VFCHandbook> or Call 1-888-646-6864. A number of suggestions or best practices for vaccine management and to assure minimal vaccine wastage are in your PA VFC Provider Handbook, Section 4.

Vaccines must be maintained properly to protect their viability. Good storage and handling procedures and vaccine management will help minimize vaccine loss and waste.

Avoid Delays in Vaccine Orders

If vaccine temperatures are out of recommended ranges during temperature logging, take immediate action to correct the problem and document the action taken on the temperature log or attach an explanation of action taken. When VFC staff receives your completed temperature log for the month, the documentation will inform staff that your facility is aware of the out-of-range temperature and are addressing any issues. If no action is indicated on the temperature log, an incident report will be required. A copy of an "Incident Report" can be located in PA VFC Provider Handbook, Section 6 or at <http://www.health.state.pa.us/VFCHandbook>.

Process Change: “Return Vaccine Shipping Label”

When requesting a UPS label for expired and wasted vaccine, **an initial and separate request for a return label is no longer required.** Effective immediately, simply complete and fax the “Vaccine Return Form” to (717) 214-7223 and a UPS label will be sent to your facility. Allow 7 to 10 business days to receive the UPS label from McKesson. The Vaccine Return Form can be found in your PA VFC Provider Handbook, Section 6 or at <http://www.health.state.pa.us/VFCHandbook>.

ALL NON-VIABLE VACCINE MUST BE RETURNED TO MCKESSON FOR EXCISE TAX CREDIT IF ORDERED THRU THE PA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH.

Why Bother?

Returning non-viable VFC vaccine is very important for our accountability to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National Immunization Program.

Returning unusable vaccine also allows PA VFC the ability to receive excise tax credits.

—Returning vaccine gets it out of your office—

PA VFC Online Ordering; Be Prepared Join Today!

The online registry interface is underway to allow all PA VFC provider sites that routinely order state-supplied vaccines to order their vaccines online through the Pennsylvania Statewide Immunization Information System (PA SIIS) registry. All current PA VFC requirements for vaccine ordering, including reporting of inventories and vaccine usage and submission of temperature logs, will remain in place under this new system. Providers without internet access not registered in PA-SIIS will continue to submit vaccine orders through the Pediatric Vaccine Order & Accountability Form. The goal is to have the majority of PA VFC provider sites ordering their VFC supplied vaccines online through the PA-SIIS registry. For more information on joining PASIIS, please contact 877-774-4748.



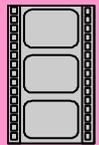
VFC Video Training

[VFC Provider Site Profile Enrollment Form](#)

[VFC Instructions for Order Form Video](#)

[VFC Temperature Log Video](#)

Log on to view training videos at <http://www.health.state.pa.us/vfc>.



PA VFC Contact Information

Connie Andescavage - Vaccine Orders
 Jill Clodgo, R.N. - Quality Assurance
 Rose Cox - Enrollment
 Cindy Findley, M.S.W. - Program Manager
 Wayne S. Fleming, M.P.A. - Provider Communication and Education
 Kathleen Keegan - Customer Service
 Donna Markle, R.N. - Quality Assurance
 Nancy Mumper - Vaccine Manager
 Maureen Young - Customer Service

Toll Free Line 1-888-646-6864
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