



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Public Health – Women’s & Children’s Health Section
1917 Mail Service Center • Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1917
Tel 919-707-5550 • Fax 919-870-4824

Beverly Eaves Perdue, Governor

Lanier M. Cansler, Secretary

November 15, 2010

MEMORANDUM

TO: North Carolina Immunization Program (NCIP) Participants

FROM: Beth Rowe-West, R.N., B.S.N, Head
Immunization Branch

SUBJECT: Provider Choice in Vaccines and Changes in Vaccine Eligibility

The purpose of this memo is to inform providers of recent expansions to the NCIP Coverage Criteria which are effective **immediately**. These changes are also reflected in the updated coverage criteria document on the NCIP website:
www.immunizenc.com/coveragecriteria.htm

- Any vaccine available on contract through the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program may now be ordered through the NCIP. Therefore, providers with a product preference may choose that brand as long as it is available through the VFC program. If a brand chosen by a provider is not available and an antigen equivalent vaccine is available, the equivalent brand may be shipped without notification. Because the manufacturing and distribution systems for influenza vaccine established by vaccine manufacturers and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are unique and require significant planning to avoid delays, the NCIP must limit brand choice for influenza vaccine. Available funding for adult vaccines, including the expansion criteria listed below, may also affect provider choice. The NCIP will make every attempt to honor provider choice whenever possible. Providers not using the North Carolina Immunization Registry (NCIR) may obtain an updated NCIP Vaccine Requisition Inventory Form at www.immunizenc.com/forms.htm
- As an additional expansion of existing criteria, providers may administer state-supplied MCV4, Tdap, MMR, and influenza vaccines universally to any person who is entering a four-year college or university in North Carolina for the first time. Although funds are currently available to administer these vaccines universally, continued coverage is subject to funding availability. For the complete and updated criteria for each vaccine, go to: www.immunizenc.com/coveragecriteria.htm
- Private providers may give one dose of state-supplied Tdap to health care workers (HCW) employed at their practices. Local health departments may give one dose of state-supplied Tdap to health care workers in their communities. For detailed recommendations for and definition of HCW and, see *Immunization of Health-Care Workers: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and the Hospital Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee* at www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00050577.htm

In all cases, vaccine recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) must be followed when administering NCIP vaccines.

If you have questions about these changes, please contact the N.C. Immunization Branch at 919-707-5550.

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cc: RICs SMT CO Staff Vaccine Manufacturers Steve Shore Taryn Edwards
RINs Joy Reed Greg Griggs Jessica Gerdes Timika Poston Maclyn Powell
Jeff Engel, MD Megan Davies, MD