



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
Albert A. Delia, Acting Secretary

Laura Gerald, MD, MPH
State Health Director

August 21, 2012

MEMORANDUM

TO: Private Providers Participating in the North Carolina Immunization Program (NCIP)

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

SUBJECT: Upcoming Changes to the North Carolina Immunization Program

The purpose of this memo is to provide additional information regarding significant NCIP program changes that were initially announced in a memo dated May 29, 2012. These changes are based on new federal requirements issued from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Providers Serving Underinsured Children

Effective October 1, 2012, with some exceptions private providers may no longer provide Vaccines for Children (VFC) immunizations to underinsured children. After October 1, 2012, most private providers may only serve VFC children who are in one of the following categories:

- Medicaid
- American Indian/Alaska native
- Uninsured

After October 1, 2012, FQHCs, RHCs, and local health departments (LHDs) will continue to be allowed to provide VFC vaccines to underinsured children. Additionally, a few select private providers approved by the CDC will be given authority to vaccinate underinsured children based on geographic determinations to improve access to vaccines. If your practice is in the group of CDC-approved practices, you will be notified in separate correspondence.

Screening for underinsured status is particularly important as providers will need to know which children to refer to FQHCs, RHCs, and LHDs for their immunizations. (For assistance in determining VFC eligibility, see the document *Determining Eligibility for VFC Vaccines Flow Chart* at: <http://www.immunize.nc.gov>.) Providers will no longer be able to move doses of VFC vaccine into their private stock when they discover that a patient who has been given purchased vaccine is underinsured. We apologize for the potential disruption to maintaining your patients’ medical home.

An out-of-pocket administration fee may be charged to adult patients receiving NCIP products, as is the case with non-Medicaid VFC eligible children. The fee is limited to the current CMS regional rate (the amount paid by Medicaid). According to federal rules, when vaccinating a VFC-eligible child, if a parent states an inability to pay an out-of-pocket administration fee, VFC vaccine must be administered and the fee must be waived.

Upcoming Coverage Changes

In anticipation of implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), which expands insurance coverage for immunization services, the CDC has eliminated federal funding for the vaccination of insured patients in most circumstances. Therefore, the NCIP will be making numerous changes to our coverage criteria effective October 1, 2012. Until October 1, providers should base their orders on vaccine usage reported in NCIR or on VAL forms.

Effective October 1, 2012, except for the situations listed below, **state supplied vaccines may NOT be administered to a fully insured patient of any age. Beginning October 1, all vaccines currently available for adults (persons aged 19 years and above) will be available for uninsured adults only.** (Adults who are Medicaid or Medicare recipients are considered covered, or insured, for this purpose.) Details on which patients are currently covered by NCIP vaccine may be found at: <http://bit.ly/ncipcoveragecriteria>.

Exceptions for all NCIP providers:

- The hepatitis B birth dose remains universally available (that is, available regardless of insurance status).
- Influenza vaccine for the 2012-13 influenza season may be administered according to the criteria as specified in the flu coverage criteria.
- DT will remain universal, that is, for all children 2 months through 6 years of age who have a medical contraindication to pertussis vaccine.

Vaccine Supplies

The changes outlined in this memo are effective for all vaccine received in provider offices after October 1, 2012. Vaccine that providers have on hand prior to October 1 may continue to be used according to the existing NCIP Coverage Criteria document (dated July 24, 2012) until that vaccine expires or until December 31, 2012, whichever comes first. After December 31, all state-supplied vaccine must be used according to the coverage criteria dated October 1 or later.

Resources for Providers

Providers are encouraged to participate in one of three free webinars which will be offered next week. The webinars are expected to last about an hour and the content will be repeated in each session. Providers should go to the web site indicated below and call the phone number listed for the session they choose. No pre-registration is required. **Please remember to mute your phone.**

Date	Time	Website	Phone
Tuesday, August 28	4 PM	https://ncpublichealth.ncgovconnect.com/nc2012ccc1/	919-662-4658
Wednesday, August 29	12 Noon	https://ncpublichealth.ncgovconnect.com/nc2012ccc2/	919-715-0769
Thursday, August 30	9 AM	https://ncpublichealth.ncgovconnect.com/nc2012ccc3/	919-733-2511

For your convenience, a Q & A document is currently available on our website at: www.immunize.nc.gov. The NCIP Coverage Criteria document will be updated on our website by late September for the changes effective October 1.

If you have additional questions about the implementation of these changes, please contact us at: NCIRHelp@dhhs.nc.gov.

Cc: SMT NC Immunization Branch Steve Shore Greg Griggs Maclyn Powell
 Joy Reed NCIB Field Services Ann Nichols Vaccine Manufacturers Taryn Edwards