



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services  
Division of Public Health – Women’s & Children’s Health Section

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Michael F. Easley, Governor

Dempsey Benton, Secretary

October 6, 2008

Memorandum

To: Universal Childhood Vaccine Distribution Program (UCVDP) Participants

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

Re: Current Inventory Status of Hib-Containing Products in North Carolina

The purpose of this memo is to update providers on the continued shortage of *Haemophilus influenzae* type B (Hib) vaccine. As you know, on December 13, 2007, Merck & Co., Inc. announced a voluntary recall of certain lots of two *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib) conjugate vaccines, PedvaxHIB™ (monovalent Hib vaccine) and Comvax™ (Hib/hepatitis B vaccine). Since that time the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have allocated all publicly-funded doses of Hib vaccine based on currently available national supplies. Merck and the CDC indicate that supplies of PedvaxHIB™ will return to market sometime in November or December 2008.

Since the introduction of Pentacel™ (DTaP/IPV/Hib combination vaccine) into the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program (June 26, 2008), the CDC has provided part of each state’s Hib vaccine allocation in the form of Pentacel™. The proportion of ActHIB™ to Pentacel™ vaccines received by the state has been fixed by the CDC and represents a higher proportion of Pentacel™ than providers are currently requesting. As a result, North Carolina is being required to reduce orders for ActHIB™ more drastically than earlier in the year and to provide Pentacel™ so that you may vaccinate as many children as possible with Hib-containing vaccine. CDC expects this distribution pattern to continue until the national supply of single-antigen Hib vaccine returns to normal. Pentacel™ supplies are sufficient to meet the three-dose primary series for Hib vaccine, so incorporating the use of Pentacel in your practice will decrease the number of children in your community at risk for invasive Hib disease.

Some providers have expressed a wish to continue predominantly or exclusively to use ActHIB™. Based on CDC allocations, we cannot currently honor this request. However, since it is our desire to accommodate individual practice preferences as much as possible, we would like to hear from any practices that wish to receive Pentacel™ predominantly or exclusively. If a large number of practices wish to make this transition, we will do the best we can to match practice shipments to practice requests with respect to the two types of vaccine to be shipped.

We regret not being able to offer you a choice of Hib products; however we can only supply the vaccine as it is allocated to us by the CDC. Therefore, we must supply Pentacel™ to all providers in order to maximize the amount of Hib vaccine in your practice and to prevent children from being turned away without vaccination due to the shortage of single antigen Hib vaccine supplies. Pentacel™ is currently available at McKesson Specialty without delay and ships on the same schedule as other vaccines. It may be administered to all children, aged six weeks to four years without contraindications, as part of their primary series of DTaP, polio, and Hib vaccines. Orders may be placed via NCIR, by phone (1-877-873-6247), or by fax (1-800-544-3058), using the most current UCVDP Vaccine Requisition/Inventory Form.

Please review the following documents pertaining to the use of UCVDP-supplied DTaP/IPV/Hib combination vaccine (Pentacel™) before incorporating it into your practice:

**UCVDP Coverage Criteria**

- <http://www.immunizenc.org/images/PDFs/UCVDP%20&%20ACIP%20COVERAGE%20CRITERIA%20-%209.16.08.pdf>
- **Pentacel Package Insert:** [http://www.vaccineshoppe.com/image.cfm?doc\\_id=10193&image\\_type=product\\_pdf](http://www.vaccineshoppe.com/image.cfm?doc_id=10193&image_type=product_pdf)
- **CDC Guidance on the use of Pediarix and Pentacel:** <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/downloads/pentacel-guidance.pdf>

If you have questions about your current supply of vaccines, ordering state-supplied Pentacel™, or the vaccine order form, please call your Regional Immunization Nurse Consultant or the Immunization Branch Help Desk at 1-877-873-6247.

CC: SMT NC Immunization Branch NCIB Field Services Steve Shore Dr. Leah Devlin  
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