



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Public Health • Office of the State Health Director
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State Health Director

June 28, 2010

MEMORANDUM

TO: North Carolina Immunization Program (NCIP) Participants

FROM: Jeffrey Engel, MD
State Health Director

SUBJECT: **URGENT:** Change to the North Carolina Immunization Program

The purpose of this memo is to alert providers to a significant change to the North Carolina Immunization Program (NCIP). This change is expected to result from the planned phase out of State funding for vaccines beginning July 1, 2010. These funds have been traditionally used to provide vaccines to all children regardless of insurance status.

It is important to understand that this phase out of state funding will not affect the federal Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program, so the NCIP will continue to provide vaccine at no charge to providers for children eligible for the VFC program.

As you know, VFC-eligible children are those who are Medicaid-eligible, American Indian or Alaskan native, uninsured, or underinsured. Underinsured children are those whose insurance does not cover vaccines because there is no wellness plan, a wellness plan cap has been met, or only certain vaccines are covered. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), not being fully reimbursed for the cost of vaccine is no longer considered underinsured—those children are insured. Insured children (including Health Choice) are those whose insurance plans will cover vaccine after deductibles and co-payments are met.

In anticipation of this phase out of state funding for vaccines, the NCIP is limiting orders of state-supplied vaccines based on provider-reported doses administered and eligibility data submitted through the North Carolina Immunization Registry (NCIR) or Vaccines Administered Logs (VALs). After June 30, 2010, the NCIP will no longer accept vaccine orders for insured children. As is currently the case for certain vaccines such as rotavirus and meningococcal, all vaccines needed by children who are not eligible for the VFC program must be purchased by providers. The North Carolina Pediatric Society (NCPs) and the North Carolina Academy of Family Physicians (NCAFP) will help identify vaccine purchasing groups that offer favorable pricing for vaccines. Both organizations also will provide assistance about billing and coding practices to help ensure reimbursement. Information will be posted on the associations' websites.

We appreciate the support of Dr. Marian Earls and Dr. R.W. "Chip" Watkins on behalf of their professional associations as we address this challenge. We encourage local health departments and



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private providers to work together to develop transition plans that will provide immunization services while maintaining a child's medical home. Please note that the current proposed budget for SFY 2010 - 2011 includes one-time transition funding for the next fiscal year. The NCIP will provide additional guidance on the use of these funds in the very near future.

We appreciate all that you do to ensure the health of North Carolina's children and adolescents, and will notify you regarding the final changes once the budget is final. If you have questions or need assistance with understanding your non-VFC population, or identifying vaccine suppliers, please contact the Immunization Branch at 1-877-873-6247.