



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

Thomas Farley, MD, MPH
Commissioner

December 28, 2011

Jane R. Zucker, MD, MSc
Assistant Commissioner
Bureau of Immunization

42-09 28th Street, CN21
Queens, NY 11101-4132

Dear Colleague:

During recent Vaccines for Children (VFC) site visits, we have identified several incidents during which practices recorded out-of-range temperatures for their vaccine storage units without recognizing the significance of the temperature(s) and without taking appropriate action(s). Because of this, a large number of children were immunized with vaccines that were not viable, and hence needed to be recalled and revaccinated. Recalls undermine confidence in the immunization program and your practice.

We would like to remind you that to assure the viability of vaccines, storage units must maintain the following temperatures:

- **Refrigeration Unit: 35° - 46° F (2° - 8° C)**
- **Freezer Unit: ≤ 5° F (≤ -15° C)**

Vaccine storage units are required to have certified, calibrated thermometers in the middle of the unit, and temperatures must be recorded twice daily on an appropriate temperature log. We recommend the log sheet available at: www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/imm/split-month-temp-log.pdf. The advantage of using this log sheet is that it alerts you as to when the temperature is out of range, since these ranges are highlighted on the sheet. You will be prompted to take immediate action, thereby helping to prevent unnecessary spoilage of vaccines. To help ensure that temperatures are consistently within the recommended temperatures, please have your designated Vaccine Coordinator sign each temperature log page as it is completed (approximately every 2 weeks).

As a reminder, **never** use expired or “potentially spoiled” vaccines. This will help you avoid having to recall and re-immunize children vaccinated with spoiled vaccines. Should temperatures fall out of range in your storage unit, immediately place a sign on the stored vaccines indicating ‘**Do Not Use**’. Maintain these vaccines in the storage unit and call the vaccine manufacturers for instructions. Should the manufacturers inform you that the vaccines are spoiled, please call the Bureau of Immunization at 347-396-2404. We will assist you in returning the spoiled vaccines to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s distributor.

For further questions, please email us at nycimmunize@health.nyc.gov or call 347-396-2404. Thank you for helping to ensure the integrity of the vaccine supply.

Sincerely,

Jane R. Zucker, MD, MSc
Assistant Commissioner