



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE
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Commissioner

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Bureau of Immunization
2 Lafayette Street, 19th Fl.
New York, NY 10007

November 20, 2009

Dear Colleague:

We recognize that everyone is extremely busy during the H1N1 vaccination campaign. During this busy time, we are writing to you with two important reminders. First, in a letter dated August 11, 2009 all providers currently enrolled in the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program were informed of the requirement to re-enroll in VFC by December 31, 2009. Effective September 15, 2009, all providers are required to complete annual, online re-enrollment by December 31st of each year. Please do not delay in completing your re-enrollment to avoid any potential problems with vaccine supply. Not completing the re-enrollment process by this date may affect your ability to order VFC vaccine in 2010. The one page re-enrollment form is available in the Online Registry under the VFC icon. If you do not already have an Online Registry user name and password, call the Citywide Immunization Registry (CIR) at 212-676-2323. By completing the annual re-enrollment form you will be agreeing to the terms and conditions of the VFC Program; these requirements can be found at: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/imm/immvfc.shtml>

Second, starting January 1, 2010 vaccine doses reported to the CIR with no indication of VFC eligibility status will no longer be counted as VFC eligible in the CIR- generated doses administered report (DAR). All doses reported to the CIR must indicate one of the eligibility categories for vaccines distributed through VFC: Medicaid, uninsured, insurance does not cover vaccine, American Indian or Alaskan Native, or Child Health Plus B (CHPB). Failure to report that vaccine doses were administered to a VFC-eligible child may lower your DAR and result in a reduction of the number of doses of VFC vaccine received. Reporting a child's VFC eligibility status can be accomplished easily by reporting through the Online Registry. Should you have questions or need assistance with using the Online Registry or reporting VFC eligibility, please call the CIR at 212-676-2323.

The purpose of this letter is also to draw your attention to two important issues regarding vaccine storage and handling. The use of dormitory style refrigerator/freezer units and single door combined refrigerator/freezer units are not permitted for the permanent storage of VFC vaccines due to the risk of temperature fluctuations. Any frozen vaccines (e.g. varicella-containing vaccines) should never be stored in these types of storage units. If you have a dormitory style refrigerator, please replace it with an appropriate storage unit for storage of vaccines. Appropriate storage units can be defined as: 1) a refrigerator that has a separate freezer compartment with a separate exterior door (household or commercial use), or 2) stand-alone refrigerators and freezers.

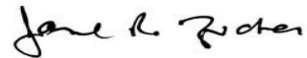
All enrolled VFC providers are required to use certified calibrated thermometers. Temperature readings should be taken twice daily and recorded on monthly temperature

logs. Temperature logs should be filed and kept for a minimum of three years for review by Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) during regular site visits. Accurate and complete temperature logs serve multiple purposes. Temperature logs may alert your practice that a storage unit may be malfunctioning, may lessen the number of children and parents inconvenienced by a vaccination recall, and ultimately ensure that the vaccines administered by your practice are, and have been, stored and handled in accordance with the requirements of the VFC Program. We are asking all providers to be proactive and replace all thermometers and all permanent dormitory style refrigerator/freezer storage units by December 31, 2009. If you have questions about vaccine storage and handling, please call Karen Fernandez at 212-447-3329.

For more information about vaccine storage and handling, please go to our Website at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/imm/vfcpt.shtml#4> or go to <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/storage/default.htm>.

Thank you again for your hard work in vaccinating your patients.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane R. Zucker". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J".

Jane R. Zucker, MD, MSc
Assistant Commissioner