

Vaccines For Children Program

The Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program is intended to help raise childhood immunization levels in the United States by supplying---at no cost to private and public health care providers who participate---federally purchased vaccine to administer to eligible children.

In 2000, Healthy People 2010, with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), set immunization goals for the year 2000 that call for at least 90% of children to have completed the primary series of childhood immunizations. The Vaccines for Children Program works to reduce vaccine cost as a barrier to the immunization of children.

How does the program work?

One—Enroll in the Vaccines for Children Program and agree to screen and vaccinate only eligible children served in your practice or clinic.

Two—Fill out a provider profile annually to determine the amount of vaccine to be provided to you up front, no expense to you.

Three—Order vaccine as directed. Submission of a monthly immunization report, along with temperature logs, is required to account for your vaccine usage. Electronic submission of these and of vaccine orders is available for your convenience.

1. Enrollment & Screening

Enrollment is easy for health care providers. You agree to participate in the Vaccines for Children Program by filling out the enrollment forms provided by your state that list the requirements outlined in the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 (OBRA). The OBRA legislation authorizes the funding for the Vaccines for Children Program. Your state will keep a list of all VFC-registered providers.

What does a provider agree to when enrolling?

- ▶ Screen the parent or guardian to determine if the child (birth through 18 years of age) is eligible for VFC vaccine. (Verification by the parent is not required.)
- ▶ Maintain a record of the screening on all children who are eligible and receive vaccine through the VFC Program. (No record of screening needs to be kept for children who are not VFC eligible.)
- ▶ Follow the current recommended immunization schedule as established by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and state law. The American Academy of Pediatrics schedule conforms with the ACIP recommendations. (Individual medical judgment may be exercised.)
- ▶ Do not charge for VFC supplied vaccine. Administration fees may be charged (regional fee caps are established by the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services) so long as service is not denied because the fee cannot be paid.
- ▶ Provide vaccine information statements and maintain records required by the Vaccine Injury Compensation Act. (This is required of all physicians without regard to the VFC Program.)
- ▶ Complete the VFC provider enrollment and provider profile annually.
- ▶ Track doses of VFC vaccine administered and report monthly.

Screening children for eligibility is a simple process. Children eligible for free vaccine through the VFC Program are persons age birth through age 18 years who fall in one or more of the following categories:

- ▶ Without health insurance
- ▶ Enrolled in Medicaid
- ▶ American Indian or Alaskan Native (as identified by the parent or guardian)
- ▶ Underinsured—Meaning the child has some type of health insurance but it does not include vaccines as a covered benefit. These children are eligible for VFC vaccines only at Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC)s or Rural Health Clinics (RHC)s that are officially registered.

Based on a survey of State Immunization Programs and Medicaid agencies, more than 60% of infants nationwide are estimated to be eligible for vaccine through the VFC Program.

The screening checklist may be completed by the parent, guardian, individual of record, or health care provider. You may use either the Vaccine Eligibility Screening Record Form or the Vaccine Documentation/Consent Form to record this data. Remember to keep this information in the VFC patient's record.

Screening is required only once, unless the child's status changes (e.g., the child is subsequently covered by health insurance through a parent's new job). You do not need to keep the screening information on hand for children in your practice who are not eligible for VFC vaccine. Again, verification by the parent of responses is not required.

2. Provider Profile

The Vaccines for Children Program guarantees a supply of all vaccines necessary to immunize VFC-eligible children, based on the Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommendations. If you are a health care provider enrolled in the VFC Program, you will order and receive vaccine at no cost.

On the Annual VFC Provider Enrollment/Profile Forms, you identify your type of practice (e.g., private practice, hospital, rural health clinic) and estimate the number of children to be immunized in your practice, as well as the number of those children who will be VFC eligible.

Your State Immunization Program will keep this record on file and will refer to it each time you place an order for vaccine. Vaccine is provided using multiple funding sources. The document will be used to assist in apportioning your order by funding source. You will need to update and submit this information annually, and may revise it as often as necessary.

The VFC Program will not replace vaccine stock you purchase but will instead provide a supply of vaccine "up-front." The VFC program will have no impact on your present vaccine purchases for private-pay patients. The vaccines and combination vaccines offered with the VFC program are those providing protection against sixteen diseases:

- ▶ diphtheria
- ▶ haemophilus influenzae type B
- ▶ hepatitis A
- ▶ hepatitis B
- ▶ human papillomavirus
- ▶ influenza
- ▶ measles
- ▶ meningitis
- ▶ mumps
- ▶ pertussis
- ▶ pneumococcal
- ▶ poliomyelitis

- ▶ rotavirus
- ▶ rubella
- ▶ tetanus
- ▶ varicella

As new vaccines and combinations are approved by the FDA and recommended by the ACIP, they will be added.

3. Distribution & Restocking

Once enrolled in the VFC Program, you can expect your first delivery of vaccine within 30 days after placing your first order. You will be asked to place vaccine orders with your State Immunization Program. **When you place your vaccine order, allow up to 30 days for delivery.**

Although the State Immunization Program will be maintaining separate fiscal accounts for vaccines purchased with VFC funds (federal 317 grant funds and state or local funds), the individual public or private health care provider enrolled in the VFC Program will not be required to separate orders in this way. The vaccines ordered through the state **need not be separated** or coded in your practice or clinic according to the funds used to purchase it by the state.

In *Kansas*, vaccine is shipped from a national vaccine warehouse to individual providers. All orders for vaccines will go through the State Immunization Program.

Although the Annual VFC Provider Enrollment/Profile Forms will be the principal document to evaluate the VFC Program, some states may establish other vaccine reporting requirements. The legislation that expands the supply of public-purchased vaccine at no cost to providers also allows for states to review provider records.

The Vaccines for Children Program contributes to the national goal of adequately vaccinating 90% of 2-year-old children by removing the barrier of vaccine cost for eligible children.

The Kansas Immunization Program may be reached on the web at www.kdheks.gov/immunize, by e-mail at ehutton@kdheks.gov, by mail at 1000 SW Jackson, Topeka, Kansas 66612-1724, or by phone at 785-296-5592.