

Changes in Vaccine Distribution System

Direct Delivery of Vaccines Coming to You in 2008

Most of you have heard that the Vermont Department of Health Immunization Program will be moving to direct distribution and delivery of vaccines in January of 2008. This national initiative is being launched by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) with the goal of improving efficiency and saving program costs.

Benefits Include:

VT providers

- Staff time will not be used to pick up vaccine at the Vermont Department of Health
- Vaccine will be delivered to your door, shipped by McKesson, a national medical products distributor
- Varicella vaccine will continue to be shipped directly from the manufacturer to your practice on dry ice

VT Immunization Program and District Health Offices

- More resources focused on statewide immunization initiatives rather than distribution

CDC National Immunization Program

- Savings due to less vaccine inventory and economies of scale
- Lower costs system-wide enable funding of other immunization priorities
- Increased ability to manage national crises such as outbreaks or supply disruptions: fewer unique vaccine inventory sites improves flexibility and inventory visibility

What Will This Mean for You?

- Your point of contact for vaccine ordering will be The VDH Immunization Program Central Office
- The VDH Central Office, along with the Local Health Department offices will continue to work with you conducting site visits, providing information and assessments of vaccination rates in an effort to provide practice specific information about coverage rates
- Neither the Immunization Program nor the Local Health Department offices will stock vaccines for distribution
- The 12 Local Health offices will continue to maintain only a very small supply of vaccine for use in their own immunization clinics (i.e., providing varicella vaccine to children whose own health care provider does not have a freezer for Varivax storage.)

The challenge for VT providers will be anticipating needs with adequate lead time for ordering, processing, shipping and delivery. The CDC and Vermont Immunization Program will work with providers to determine order schedules specific to your site based on historic volume of vaccine used, ordering patterns and refrigerator capacity. More details to come this fall.

Varicella Vaccine Delays

Provider practices are experiencing a delay in receiving orders of varicella vaccine. **Current lag time for varicella vaccine orders is more than three weeks.** The Vermont Department of Health Immunization Program orders vaccine weekly and Merck & Co. Inc ships vaccine to provider practice sites directly on dry ice. **MMRV VACCINE IS NO LONGER AVAILABLE!**
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Vermont Immunization Coverage Rates Increase!

Vermont Ranking Increased from 51st in the Nation to 46th

According to the National Immunization Survey (NIS) data for 2005/2006 Vermont coverage rates are on an upward trend. The NIS data looks at 4 DTaP, 3 polio, 1 MMR, 3 Hib, 3 hepatitis B and 1 varicella vaccine by age 19 to 35 months. Our coverage rates for this series of immunizations went up 5.1 percentage points from 62.9% to 68%. Our higher ranking is due to the increase in coverage rates for varicella which has gone up 6 percentage points from 68.5% to 74.8%. Keep up the good work. Have you had a coverage assessment done at your practice by the VDH Immunization Program? Check your rates and see how you can continue to increase the immunization coverage rates in your practice!

Influenza Vaccine Update

It is not too early to talk about flu vaccine. We are currently not aware of any influenza vaccine delays or shortages. The Vermont Department of Health expects to receive many small partial deliveries of vaccine. This should not be interpreted as a delay or shortage. All manufactured doses of influenza vaccine do not roll off the manufacturing line at the same time. CDC calls this "early season limited supply." Influenza vaccine is always distributed over five months, September through January. The Immunization Program does not know when to expect shipments or how many doses we will receive. In the 2006 influenza season, the Immunization Program distributed 10% of the flu vaccine supply in early October, 15% in late October, 12% in early November, and the remaining vaccine, over 60% in late November. Our intention is to supply influenza vaccine to practices for all children, but we will not be able to predict timing or quantity of shipments.

What about Preservative Free Influenza Vaccine?

The Immunization Program will receive .25 ml syringes of preservative free influenza vaccine, but not enough for all children aged less than three years. All of the preservative free vaccine that was allotted to the state was ordered. About 20% of our supply is .25 preservative free. The remaining 80% of the pediatric influenza vaccine doses will be in multi-dose vials from two manufacturers.

Save the Date: Immunization Conference 10/30/2007

The Vermont Department of Health Presents:

What's New in Immunizations?

At the Stowe/Flake Mountain Resort and Spa

It will feature:

- New immunization recommendations and products
- Methods to improve pediatric vaccine coverage rates
- Vermont epidemiology of vaccine preventable diseases
- Adolescent immunization issues
- Adult immunization recommendations
- Keynote by CDC's Dr. Andrew Kroger
- Brochures will be mailed in early September

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