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## Frequently Asked Questions

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If you have a question, then this document is for you. We have gathered the most frequently-asked questions and put them into an easy-to-reference section for your convenience.

In this document you will find questions and answers on the following:

- Enrollment
- Patient Eligibility
- Vaccine Reporting
- Storage/Handling and Shipment Issues
- Administration Fee and Reimbursement

If you have a question that is not answered here, please call our toll-free number at **(800) 848-3868** to receive assistance from a Vaccines for Children representative.

### General

**Q Is Medicaid required (federally mandated) to cover vaccines on the current childhood immunization schedule for the Medicaid population?**

**A** Yes, all of the recommended vaccines are part of the HealthChecks benefit package for Medicaid children under age 21. Immunizations for children through age 18 years are covered by the VFC program. The Medicaid program covers vaccines for Medicaid members aged 19 years through 20 years separately.

**Q How long should VFC records be retained by a provider?**

**A** At minimum, VFC program provider records must be kept for a period of three (3) years after service to the patient has been rendered.

### Enrollment

**Q How long will it take to get the vaccines after we send in our enrollment application?**

**A** The entire enrollment process from the date of application submission to receipt of vaccines can take up to one month. This process includes application processing, site visitation and approval, and order processing and shipment.

**Q I don't know how many children we will see in a year. How do I complete this section on the Provider Profile and Enrollment Form?**

**A** Providers are encouraged to access internal documentation such as claims data, encounter data, doses administered data (providers using GRITS consistently can access this information through the registry), or other methods of assessing the number of children immunized.

**Q Which forms must be completed for Vaccines for Children Program enrollment?**

**A** In order to become enrolled in the Vaccines for Children Program, your office must complete the Provider Agreement and the Provider Profile. All medical personnel who wish to enroll must read the Provider Agreement Policy, Vaccine Loss Policy, Accountability Policy, and Fraud and Abuse Policy prior to signing the Provider Agreement. The Provider Agreement must be signed by the Medical Director and all physicians, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners should be added to the provider list.

**Q Is there any special equipment required to be enrolled in the VFC program?**

**A** Yes. Please refer to the storage equipment slide and information regarding certified thermometers included in your enrollment materials.

**Q How will I know when I have been officially enrolled in the program?**

**A** Your site will receive enrollment approval upon completion of a successful enrollment site visit. Once approved for enrollment and vaccine storage, your first vaccine order will arrive within 5 business days of your site visit.

### **Patient Eligibility**

**Q Is it necessary to complete the Patient Eligibility Screening Record each time a child is seen in our office?**

**A** The Patient Eligibility Screening Record should be completed on the child's initial visit. Subsequent visits should be documented in the "Screening Updates" portion of the form. Parents should be asked if their child's eligibility status has changed each time they visit your office. The provider must document eligibility status at every visit.

**Q Is a child that only has a limited amount of immunization coverage on his/her insurance plan (for example, \$100 maximum per year) eligible for vaccines through the VFC Program?**

**A** Once a child has reached or exceeded his/her insurance coverage cap on vaccines, the child is then classified as "Underinsured" and, therefore, eligible for vaccine supplied by the VFC Program. It should be noted that a child with this type of coverage will become ineligible for VFC vaccine at the beginning of each year, until the coverage cap has been reached.

**Q What if a child has insurance that pays for certain vaccines, but not all vaccines?**

**A** The child would be considered “Underinsured” on those vaccines not covered by the insurance policy. Only vaccines not covered by insurance should be administered out of VFC stock.

**Q We have had several situations involving a child that is fully insured but there is a high deductible to be met on the insurance policy before the insurance company will pay. Is this child eligible for VFC because of the deductible?**

**A** No. The child is still considered “Fully Insured” and cannot receive VFC vaccine. The parent will be responsible for paying for medical services billed prior to the deductible being met.

**Q How does “Medicaid enrolled” differ from “Medicaid eligible”?**

**A** For the purposes of the VFC Program, the terms, “Medicaid enrolled” and “Medicaid eligible,” are equivalent and refer to children who have health insurance covered by a state Medicaid program.

## **Vaccine Reporting**

**Q Why am I required to send in a report every month?**

**A** The monthly Comprehensive Report is the one consistent method of communication with our providers. It enables you, the provider, to be accountable for your vaccines, and it assists VFC staff in determining vaccine replenishment orders. Failure to submit regular monthly reports can easily lead to wastage, low vaccine inventory, and can result in withdrawal from the program. Remember, monthly reporting is a condition of enrollment in the VFC program.

**Q When should we submit counts in GRITS to generate the Monthly Comprehensive Report (Vaccine Usage, Inventory, and Wastage)?**

**A** Counts should be entered into GRITS once every 30 days. Once counts are entered, then the Comprehensive Report will generate which is required prior to placing your monthly vaccine order. The report details your facility’s usage and inventory, which is crucial for vaccine accountability. This report may be submitted at any time during the month, but only once during the month. Monthly reporting allows us to keep your facility adequately stocked with VFC vaccine.

**Q How does your system calculate how much vaccine to send us based on our Vaccine Usage Report?**

**A** Our system analyzes your reported inventory and monthly usage amount of each vaccine your office has received. The system calculates the amount your office would need for a three-month supply based on usage multiplied by three then by subtracting the number of doses reported as inventory. The difference between your three-month supply and your reported inventory is the recommended vaccine shipment.

Formula:

Vaccine usage x 3 – doses listed as inventory = # of replenishment doses to ship

*\*During vaccine shortages, this formula may be reduced to a 1-2 month supply*

**Q Can I order additional vaccines over the amount of doses presumed needed?**

**A** Guidance for placing orders above the doses presumed needed totals are updated in the monthly VFC Newsletter. Under normal conditions when vaccines are not in short supply, providers may order up to 30 doses over the amount listed as presumed needed.

**Q Why do I run out of vaccines before my next order if the system calculates my need?**

**A** The formula used to calculate your replenishment order is based on a math formula that cannot be modified to accommodate accelerated use of vaccines in your office. The formula is intended to work for provider offices currently housing a 3 month inventory supply. If your office does not have a 3 month surplus then you may need to contact VFC to place one large order to increase your inventory supply so that the formula works for you. Once your stock is sufficiently supplied, it is up to your Vaccine Coordinator to ensure that the inventory supply does not drop below the 2 month mark.

**Q Do I need to send in a Vaccine Order Form with my Comprehensive Report each month?**

**A** No. The Vaccine Order Form should only be submitted for your initial order during enrollment. Requests for additional vaccine may be submitted with your monthly report or via email to [DPH-gavfc@dph.ga.gov](mailto:DPH-gavfc@dph.ga.gov).

**Q If I submit my counts today, how soon will I receive my shipment?**

**A** Usually, you will receive your shipment within 7-10 business days from the date your order is submitted in GRITS. Clinic staff may check on the status of the order on the Manage Orders Screen. Orders will move from 'Pending' within 2 days, and once the status changes to 'Sent to CDC/Distributor' your order will arrive in 3-5 business days. As a reminder, refrigerated vaccines will be shipped from McKesson's distribution center whereas frozen vaccines are shipped directly from the manufacturer.

## **Q Why is my order still 'In Progress'?**

**A** Orders that remain as 'In Progress' status for more than 1 day indicates that there is an issue with the monthly report. Clinic staff are required to review their Monthly Comprehensive Report for errors that appear as doses listed in the Insured/Ineligible column and doses over -5 on the Vaccine Accountability Statement. Providers who fail to correct doses listed in the Insured/Ineligible column will have their order placed on hold until VFC receives a corrected report or replacement of the doses administered to non-eligible patients. Reports indicated -6 doses or more will be given a 30 day grace period for research into the missing doses. Once the issue is resolved, corrections or an explanation of the doses must be sent to VFC. Failure to submit corrections within 30 days will result in a suspension of all future vaccine shipments.

## **Storage/Handling and Shipment Issues**

### **Q What should I do if I receive warm or damaged vaccines?**

**A** Call our office **IMMEDIATELY** at 1-800-848-3868. We will be able to help you determine if the vaccine is still viable and generate a replacement shipment if needed. Vaccines should be placed into the proper storage temperature as quickly as possible. Vaccines should not be discarded prior to calling our office to determine viability. Keep vaccines stored appropriately (i.e., refrigerated vaccines in the refrigerator, frozen vaccines in the freezer) until advised otherwise.

### **Q What should we do if we start a child using one brand of vaccine but receive another in the middle of completing the series?**

**A** According to the ACIP, a series should be completed with the same brand of vaccine if possible. However, administering doses of the same series using different brands does not adversely affect safety or immunogenicity. If you do not know what brand of vaccine a child has received or do not have that particular brand in your inventory, you should use the vaccine you have in stock.

### **Q What should I do if I have vaccine that has expired or is about to expire?**

**A** As stewards of vaccines purchased with taxpayer dollars, we should have **zero** doses of expired vaccine. Policy states that provider must notify the VFC Program at [dph-gavfc@dph.ga.gov](mailto:dph-gavfc@dph.ga.gov) 90 days prior to the expiration date. In many instances, we are able to transport short-dated vaccines to another location to be used before the expiration date. If we are unable to move the short-dated vaccine, we may also recommend that you use as much as you can and expire remaining doses. We will make every attempt to transfer the vaccines to another location for administration before the expiration date. You may be required to replace unreported expired vaccine (see the Vaccine Loss Policy for more detail).

Expired vaccine will automatically appear on the monthly Comprehensive Report following the date of expiration. Wastage will be processed by the Vaccine Logistics Associate In approximately 7 days, the primary contact will receive a UPS return label via email from McKesson Specialty Distribution's email address

[pkginfo@ups.com](mailto:pkginfo@ups.com). The subject line for the return label will be titled, “UPS Label Delivery, Label tracking Number”.

Labels expire in 30 days so it is imperative that you print and pack the vaccines for return immediately upon receipt.

Affix return label to the box and give it to your UPS driver the next time s/he is in your office. Note: If you call UPS or FedEx directly, you will be charged for the retrieval of the box(es).

**Q What should I do if there is a discrepancy between what is in the shipment and what my invoice says there should be in the shipment?**

**A** You should always check the quantity, lot number, and expiration date of the vaccines in your shipping container against your invoice to ensure you have received the correct vaccine quantities. In the event you find a discrepancy, double-check your shipping container. If after checking the content there is still a discrepancy, please contact the Vaccine Logistics Associate at 404-657-5013. VFC will follow up with McKesson regarding the discrepancy.

**Q What is CDC’s policy regarding the use of certified thermometers and the expectation in terms of frequency of re-calibrating thermometers?**

**A** The VFC Program requires every provider to have one certified digital data logger per refrigerator or freezer compartment where VFC vaccine is stored. This certified digital data logger must be used for recording temperatures. If there is not a certified digital data logger at the time of the VFC site visit in all of the vaccine storage units, then shipments may be held until the situation is corrected. The Immunization Regional Consultant will follow up to ensure the corrective actions steps were taken.

In the Vaccine Storage and Handling Toolkit, CDC recommends the use of refrigerator and freezer thermometers that have been individually certified against an ASTM or NIST standard. Additional information about thermometers is available in the Vaccine Storage and Handling Toolkit at <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/admin/storage/toolkit/storage-handling-toolkit.pdf>.

**Q How many backup thermometers are we required to have and should they also be calibrated?**

**A** Providers are required to have at least one backup digital data logger. If your clinic stores public supplied vaccine in more than one unit, then additional backups should be purchased to be sure that you have enough backups in the event that more than one of your primary digital data logger malfunctions or needs to be sent out for recalibration. It is recommended that the expiration date for the thermometers varies so that they are not all sent out for recalibration at the same time.

## Administration Fee & Reimbursement

**Q How much can we charge for an administration fee?**

**A** You are not required to charge any amount for an administration fee, but you may charge up to \$21.93 per injection.

**Q What is the reimbursement amount for vaccines administered to children enrolled in Medicaid?**

**A** The Medicaid/PeachCare reimbursement rate for vaccine administration is \$10.00 for a single and multiple antigen vaccine.

**Q What is the reimbursement amount for vaccines administered to children enrolled in Medicaid CMO?**

**A** The CHIP reimbursement rate for vaccine administration is \$18.50.

**Q Who pays the administration fee for children who are underinsured or uninsured?**

**A** The parent or guardian would pay the administration fee at the time of service if their child is underinsured or uninsured. However, no child can be denied VFC vaccine due to the parent's inability to pay the administration fee. If a child is enrolled in Medicaid or PeachCare for Kids, the administration fee is reimbursed after your claim is filed.

## Provider Enrollment

### **How to Enroll:**

- 1) Read the **Provider Agreement, Vaccine Loss Policy, Accountability Policy, and Fraud and Abuse Policy**. The Medical Director should complete and sign the **Provider Agreement**.
- 2) Complete the **Provider Profile Form**. It is very important for all sections to be completed before the profile is returned. Your first vaccine order cannot be processed without this information.
- 3) Complete the **Vaccine Order Form** to receive your first shipment of vaccines.
- 4) Fax or email the **Provider Agreement, Provider Profile, and Vaccine Order Form** to the VFC Program office at (800) 372-3627 or [DPH-gavfc@dph.ga.gov](mailto:DPH-gavfc@dph.ga.gov).
- 5) A Site Visit will be scheduled and conducted by the Immunization Regional Consultant (IRC). The IRC will provide further instruction on VFC Program requirements and will verify that your vaccine storage and temperature monitoring equipment meets program requirements. The IRC will notify the VFC office when your facility has been approved to receive vaccines.

- 6) Upon approval of your storage equipment, your initial vaccine order will be placed and will arrive within 5 business days. Your first Monthly Comprehensive Report will be due 30 days from the receipt date of your shipment.

### **Enrolling an Additional Location**

The new location will receive a unique VFC ID number; therefore, the full application packet must be submitted for each new location.

### **Enrolling New Providers for an Existing Location**

If your office needs to add new providers to the VFC Program, please follow the instructions below:

- 1) New providers (physicians, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners) must read the **Provider Agreement, Vaccine Loss Policy, Accountability Policy, Fraud and Abuse Policy**. The new providers should also be added to the Provider Profile for the site.
- 2) If you expect the patient load to increase in your facility due to the addition of new personnel, please update the estimated number of children your facility will see on the **Provider Profile (Populations Estimates Section)**. If your patient load is not expected to increase, then you are not required to update the estimates.
- 3) Fax or email the **Provider Agreement, medical/professional licenses, and Provider Profile and Enrollment Form** to the VFC Program office at (800) 372-3627 or [DPH-gavfc@dph.ga.gov](mailto:DPH-gavfc@dph.ga.gov).

### **Removal of Providers**

If a provider decides to leave your facility, the VFC Program office should be notified, in writing so we may remove the provider from our database. Please follow the instructions below:

- 1) On office letterhead, submit the name of the provider that needs to be removed along with the date of separation.
- 2) Fax or email this information to the VFC Program office at (800) 372-3627 or [DPH-gavfc@dph.ga.gov](mailto:DPH-gavfc@dph.ga.gov).

### **Withdrawing from the Program**

Contact the VFC Program to request a Withdrawal Letter. The completed form must be returned with a copy of your site's temperature logs for a period of 12 months, clinic must enter a current count of vaccines in GRITS, and once approved for vaccine transfer and the doses have been picked up by the IPC, submit a copy of your final Monthly Comprehensive Report.

If vaccines need to be picked-up, your Immunization Regional Consultant (IRC) will contact you to schedule a pick up time.



## **Update the Provider Profile**

To receive adequate quantities of vaccine in your facility, you may need to update your estimate of the number of patients to be immunized. This can be accomplished by resubmitting the **Provider Profile**.

- 1) Make a copy of the blank **Provider Profile** included in your enrollment packet.
- 2) Complete the Provider Profile Form including the new estimates for the number of patients to be seen in your office.
- 3) Fax or email the updated Provider Profile Form to the Vaccines for Children office at (800) 372-3627 or [DPH-gavfc@dph.ga.gov](mailto:DPH-gavfc@dph.ga.gov).

## **Annual Provider Recertification**

On an annual basis, VFC enrolled sites are required to recertify. During recertification, providers will review updates to VFC policies, the Provider Agreement and update the Provider Profile. This update ensures that the program maintains accurate information on all practices. Failure to complete recertification and the required CDC training modules by the deadline will result in termination from the VFC Program.