



## Department of Health

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Executive Deputy Commissioner

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Dear Pharmacist,

As you are likely aware, New York State (NYS) statute was recently amended to authorize pharmacists to immunize individuals **2 years and older against influenza**.

This letter is intended to inform you that public vaccine is available at no cost for eligible children through the NYS Vaccines for Children (VFC) program. Program information can be found online at [https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/immunization/vaccines\\_for\\_children](https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/immunization/vaccines_for_children). Application documents for pharmacies (Attachment 20, Pharmacy Provider Agreement and Attachment 21, Pharmacy Storage and Handling Plan) may be found online at [https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/immunization/vaccines\\_for\\_children/resources.htm](https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/immunization/vaccines_for_children/resources.htm).

The VFC program supplies vaccine purchased by the federal and state governments to public and private healthcare providers for eligible children up to and including the age of 18 years. A child is eligible for VFC vaccine if he or she is younger than 19 years of age and meets at least one of the following criteria:

- Medicaid-enrolled (includes both fee-for-service and managed care)
- Enrolled in the New York State Child Health Plus (CHP) insurance program
- Uninsured
- Underinsured
  - *A child who has commercial health insurance but coverage does not include vaccines; or*
  - *A child whose insurance covers only selected vaccines (VFC eligible for non-covered vaccines only); or*
  - *A child whose insurance caps vaccine coverage at a certain amount or number of visits (VFC eligible once that cap is exceeded).*
- American Indian or Alaska Native

Children with insurance that covers any part of the vaccine are not eligible for the program even if the patient must make out-of-pocket payments for vaccination due to a deductible, co-payment or coinsurance.

The VFC program provides vaccines at no cost and no fee can be charged for the vaccine. Medicaid and

Child Health Plus do not reimburse for the cost of vaccines administered to children eligible for the Vaccines for Children program. VFC program providers may bill an administration fee of up to \$25.10 for each vaccine administered to the patient or their insurance, as appropriate. However, they may not deny administration of publicly-funded vaccines to any eligible child due to the inability of the child's parent or guardian to pay the vaccine administration fee.

All providers participating in the VFC program have certain compliance obligations to ensure proper stewardship of publicly-funded vaccine. Those obligations include:

- Completion of the annual provider agreement, patient population estimates and training
- Storage of vaccine in approved refrigeration units with continuous temperature monitoring
- Use of the New York State Immunization Information System (NYSIIS) for online ordering and to document:
  - All doses administered according to the patient's VFC vaccine eligibility
  - Temperature monitoring
  - Inventory
  - Returns and wastage
- Participation in an enrollment site visit and compliance visits at least every 24 months.

VFC vaccine may not be routinely transported between sites. Therefore, pharmacies with more than one physical location or pharmacists that practice at more than one location must separately enroll each location in order to receive and administer publicly purchased vaccine at each site. Before deciding to enroll in the NYS VFC program, please estimate your eligible patient population at each physical location and consider your ability and resources to comply with NYS VFC requirements.

The NYS VFC program will accept applications for new enrollment on a rolling basis, however be aware that the time required for the enrollment process is dependent on the submission of complete and accurate paperwork and the availability of program staff for the enrollment site visit. Should you have any questions about the NYS VFC program, or to request enrollment paperwork, email [nyvfc@health.ny.gov](mailto:nyvfc@health.ny.gov).

Please review your estimated eligible patient population and, if this program will meet their needs, submit your application paperwork. We look forward to the opportunity to increase the availability of publicly funded influenza vaccine for eligible children.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Rausch-Phung, M.D., M.P.H.  
Director, Bureau of Immunization