



March 11, 2004

Lance Rodewald, MD
Director, Immunization Services Division
National Immunization Program
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Rd. NE Mailstop E-52
Atlanta, GA 30333

Dear Dr. Rodewald:

The Association of Immunization Managers (AIM), representing the state, territorial and urban area immunization projects, requests that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Immunization Program (CDC/NIP) organize a Vaccines for Children (VFC) program conference in 2004. The conference should focus on ensuring high levels of training and expertise amongst VFC project staff, and should be held independent of any other immunization meeting or conference.

Program managers are collectively responsible for over \$1 billion a year in vaccines and need a meeting to focus on issues and recommendations to ensure the quality of this vaccine supply. A conference is specifically needed at this time for several reasons:

- Turnover in VFC staff at the project level has occurred since the last conference. New staff have never been to a VFC conference and need training.
- States are currently enduring extremely tough fiscal times. Many states have restrictions on travel. As a result, immunization programs are unable to bring VFC project staff to the National Immunization Conference, the Program Managers meeting, or the Registry Conference where VFC policies may be discussed.
- The new vaccine management business initiative involves assessing the vaccine management system at the federal and grantee level and will involve recommendations for improvement. VFC project staff can contribute immensely to the success of this initiative, but they need to be informed and involved in the process.
- Several priorities of the National Immunization Program recently communicated to immunization projects at the Program Managers meeting involve the VFC program. Program managers support the need for additional focus on fraud and abuse protections in VFC and increased attention to vaccine supply maintenance.

The VFC conference would provide an opportunity for VFC project staff to work with CDC/NIP staff to improve fraud and abuse and vaccine management policies.

The Vaccines for Children program continues to be a tremendous success in providing vaccine for children in their medical homes. We appreciate the opportunity to work with you in partnership to continue this high level of success of the VFC program, and we hope you will work with us to hold a VFC conference in 2004.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "P. Talebian".

Pejman Talebian, Chair

cc: Kimberly Lane, Associate Director for Management and Operations, CDC/NIP
Claire Hannan, Executive Director, AIM