Guidelines for Incomplete Immunization Histories

June 29, 2017

Dear VFA Provider,

We all know that incomplete immunization histories are a common barrier to assessing patients for needed vaccines. Patients may be missing records due to moving, changing health care providers and other reasons.

During these circumstances, CDC’s General Best Practice Guidelines state that “adults should receive a vaccine if the dose is recommended and no record of previous administration exists. Two exceptions are the following:

1. A patient remembers being vaccinated with influenza or pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccines; this should be accepted as evidence of vaccination. However, if a patient cannot remember receiving a vaccine and no record is available, proceed with administering the vaccine.

2. If a patient has a record of military service and does not have immunization records available, providers can assume that she/he has received all vaccines recommended by the military at the time of service entry.