



SONIA Y. ANGELL, MD, MPH  
State Public Health Officer & Director

State of California—Health and Human Services Agency  
California Department of Public Health




GAVIN NEWSOM  
Governor

March 19, 2020

IZB-FY-19-20-10

TO: California Vaccines for Children (VFC) Providers

FROM: Sarah Royce, MD, MPH, Chief   
Center for Infectious Diseases  
Division of Communicable Disease Control, Immunization Branch

SUBJECT: VFC Program Continuity of Operations during the COVID-19 Pandemic

**Key takeaways from this letter include:**



- VFC Program Continuity of Operation Plan will focus on:
  - ✓ Continued receipt and processing of VFC Vaccine requests.
  - ✓ Ensuring Proper vaccine storage, handling and temperature monitoring of VFC vaccines.
  - ✓ VFC Customer Service has tested operating via telework this week.
  - ✓ VFC Program In-Person Visits suspended until further notice.

**BACKGROUND**

The California VFC Program has implemented its Continuity of Operations Plan in order to ensure continued access to publicly funded vaccines for all participating providers, and continue to provide Customer Service Support to your practice as you respond to COVID-19 in your community. Thank you for your efforts in keeping yourself, your families, and your patients safe. Please review the following guidance related to key VFC Program operation areas.

**Vaccine Ordering--VFC will continue to receive and process VFC Vaccine requests, including influenza vaccine orders**

- Submit vaccine requests with enough inventory on hand to allow 3-4 weeks for the review, processing, and delivery of vaccine requests. Please adhere to this in the event of unforeseen delays.
- Vaccine orders cannot be cancelled once approved and processed. If your practice is unable to operate during stated business hours, and has placed an order which is pending approval, immediately notify the VFC Program at [VFCfaxes@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:VFCfaxes@cdph.ca.gov).



**Vaccine Storage and Handling--Proper vaccine storage, handling, and temperature monitoring must be maintained at all times**

- Crosstrain staff in order to continue these tasks in limited staffing situations or as your clinic's vaccine coordinator(s) is diverted to COVID-19 response activities in your practice.
- Monitor, record, and review vaccine temperatures following program requirements during open business hours. Ensure ALL practice's digital data loggers have a valid and current Certificate of Calibration.
- In order to protect your vaccine supply, please make sure your data logger's batteries have been replaced for continued temperature monitoring. If practice closure is expected for several weeks, please make arrangements to transfer vaccines to other providers in your area when feasible, following VFC vaccine transport program guidance.
- Continue to respond to and report vaccine storage and handling incidents to the VFC Program's Storage and Handling Online Triage System (SHOTS).

**VFC Customer Service—will transition to operating via telework in order to implement social distancing guidance in our workplace**

- During this transition, we expect to continue with normal business hours. However, please note that as we transition, our Service Center may experience temporary call center interruptions as we troubleshoot our process.
- Inquiries may also be emailed to the VFC Program to: [VFCfaxes@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:VFCfaxes@cdph.ca.gov). Make sure you provide your PIN, topic for the inquiry, and a short description of the issue.
- VFC Program Field Representatives will also be able to assist your practice with any pending issue, or provide immunization resources as needed.

**VFC Program In-Person Visits — ALL in-person site visits will be suspended until further notice in order to minimize the impact to your practice**

- All currently scheduled in-person visits have been postponed. This is also applicable to any new provider enrollment visits. Your VFC Program Field Representative will be following up with you by phone to request documentation to assure vaccine storage and handling practices.
- In-person quality improvement (IQIP) visits and follow-up by VFC staff will also be suspended during this period. Follow-ups may be conducted over the phone. If you have any questions related to your clinic's immunization quality improvement efforts, please send an email to [IQIP@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:IQIP@cdph.ca.gov).

**VFC Operation Communications--We will continue to utilize our website and your key program contacts' e-mails to share important information with your practice. The following links provide COVID-19 Information- for you and your staff.**

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): [Information for healthcare Professionals](#)
- California Department of Public Health: [COVID-19 Updates](#); [COVID-19 Poster](#) (English); [COVID-19 Poster \(Spanish\)](#)

#### **QUESTIONS?**

If you have any questions, please call the VFC Customer Service Center at 877-243-8832 (877-2GET-VFC).