

# California Vaccines for Adults (VFA) Frequently Asked Questions

## I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

### 1. Q: What is the VFA program?

A: The California Vaccines for Adults (VFA) program has been created by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) to increase adult vaccination rates and decrease disparities in immunization coverage by:

- Providing no-cost vaccine for uninsured or underinsured adults 19 years of age and older to eligible California health centers:
  - Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs)
  - FQHC Look-Alikes
  - Rural Health Centers (RHCs)
  - Tribal health centers
  - Indian Health Services (IHS) centers
- Assisting centers participating in the program in integrating the [standards for adult immunization practice](#) into routine clinical care.

VFA program vaccines are purchased with limited federal funds called Section 317 funding and are referred to as 317-funded VFA vaccines. Most vaccines routinely recommended for adults by the federal Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) are available.

Year 4 of the VFA program runs from January 1, 2020 through December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020; the program will be extended if funding permits. Clinics may continue using the 317-funded VFA vaccines for eligible adults through each vaccine's expiration date.

### 2. Q: Which health centers are eligible for the VFA program?

A: FQHCs, FQHC Look-alikes, RHCs, IHS and tribal health centers are eligible to participate in the VFA program if they can demonstrate:

- Active participation in the California Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program;
- Experience providing a safety net for uninsured and underinsured adults;
- Current enrollment in the [California Immunization Registry](#) (CAIR) or a local immunization registry (e.g., SDIR or Healthy Futures).

### 3. Q: Are there any program limitations?

A: Certain program limitations exist, such as:

- No operating funds are available.
- Vaccines must be ordered through the CDPH VFA Program.
- Redistribution of VFA vaccine is not allowed.
- Not all recommended adult vaccines are available (see Q15).

## II. PATIENT ELIGIBILITY

### 4. Q: Which patients are eligible to receive 317-funded VFA vaccines?

A: Adults 19 years of age and older may receive VFA vaccines if they are:

- Uninsured – no public or private health insurance coverage, OR
- Underinsured – health insurance does not cover some or all VFA vaccines.

### 5. Q: Who is NOT eligible to receive 317-funded VFA vaccines?

A: Adults are not eligible to receive vaccines if they have public or private insurance that covers vaccines, including

- Coverage that requires cost-sharing, such as deductible or co-payments
- Plans that deny payment for the cost or administration of vaccines when the deductible requirement has not been met
- Full-scope Medi-Cal coverage, whether fee-for-service or managed care

### 6. Q: Are patients on Medicare eligible for 317-funded VFA vaccines?

A: This depends on the type of coverage. An individual who has both Medicare Part B and Part D is not eligible for VFA vaccines.

Patients with Medicare Part B but without Medicare Part D may receive VFA Zoster, Tdap and other vaccines that are otherwise covered by Part D, but not the routine pneumococcal and hepatitis B vaccines, which are covered by Part B.

For more information, refer to [317-funded VFA Vaccine Eligibility Based on Insurance Status](#).

### 7. Q: Are adults enrolled in Medi-Cal eligible to receive 317-funded VFA vaccines?

A: Most adults enrolled in Medi-Cal are NOT eligible to receive VFA vaccines, including:

- Adults with full scope Medi-Cal coverage
- Pregnant women with Presumptive Eligibility (also known as Pregnancy-only/Emergency Medi-Cal), as this program covers influenza and Tdap vaccinations recommended during pregnancy.
- Adults with share of cost Medi-Cal

Only non-pregnant adults on restricted-scope Medi-Cal are considered eligible for routine (non-emergency) VFA vaccines. See [VFA/VFC Vaccine Eligibility Guidelines](#).

Providers should verify if each plan's preventive healthcare services cover immunizations. If immunizations are not covered, the patient under that plan is eligible to receive VFA vaccines.

### 8. Q: Are adults enrolled in the Family PACT program eligible to receive 317-funded VFA vaccines?

A: It depends. If the patient does NOT have any public or private insurance that covers vaccines, they would be considered eligible for VFA vaccines. Family PACT is not considered an insurance, but patients may have public or private insurance that covers vaccines AND be enrolled in Family PACT.

**9. Q: Are local or county safety net, no-cost health programs considered insurance?**

A: No. No-cost health programs that provide health care services to uninsured individuals such as My Health LA (MHLA), Healthy San Francisco, etc. are not health insurance. Patients in these programs are eligible to receive VFA vaccines.

**10. Q: May 317-funded VFA vaccines be given to immigrants and refugees?**

A: It depends. VFA program sites should determine each person's healthcare benefits. Those who do not have coverage for immunizations through the State Refugee Program or health insurance may be vaccinated with VFA vaccines.

**11. Q: May 317-funded VFA vaccines be given to family members of pregnant women?**

A: Yes, if they meet the [eligibility criteria related to their insurance status](#).

**12. Q: What is your guidance for vaccinating patients with missing or incomplete immunization histories?**

A: 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.", unless he/she:

- remembers being vaccinated with influenza or pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccines, this may be accepted as evidence of vaccination.
- served in the US military and does not have immunization records available. Providers can assume that the adult has received all vaccines recommended by the military at the time of service entry.

**13. Q: How should we document patient eligibility to receive 317-funded VFA vaccines?**

A: Eligibility must be documented using your Electronic Health Record (EHR), CAIR, or a local immunization registry (e.g., SDIR or Healthy Futures). Please refer to the [VFA Screening Form](#) for eligibility verification requirements. Sites utilizing an EHR that exchanges data with an immunization registry must ensure that VFA eligibility status for all VFA doses is captured in the registry.

## **II. VACCINE ORDERING, HANDLING & STORAGE AND INVENTORY**

**14. Q: How do I order 317-funded VFA vaccine?**

A: Similar to the VFC ordering process, the steps to order VFA vaccine are:

1. Log-in to your MYVFCVaccines account.
2. Enter your VFC PIN and ZIP Code
3. Click on the button labeled "Order 317 vaccine"
4. Confirm that your Practice Delivery Information is correct
5. Select vaccine(s) from the drop-down and enter the number of doses you would like to request of each.
6. Enter 317 doses administered and on-hand.
7. Click Preview to review the order and make any corrections if necessary.
8. Click Submit to place your order.

**15. Q: What 317-funded VFA vaccines are currently available?**

A: The following VFA vaccines are currently available\*:

- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Human Papilloma Virus (HPV)\*\*
- Meningococcal Conjugate (MCV4/MenACWY)
- Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)
- Pneumococcal Conjugate (PCV13)\*\*
- Pneumococcal Polysaccharide (PPSV23)
- Tetanus, Diphtheria (Td)
- Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis (Tdap)
- Varicella
- Zoster

\*The list is subject to change; refer to order page for the most current list of vaccines.

\*\*Available in limited quantities.

**16. Q: How frequently may my clinic order 317-funded VFA vaccines?**

A: Participating clinics can order VFA vaccines during a two-week period at the beginning of each quarter.

Ordering periods for Year 4:\*

- January 8–22
- April 6–17
- July 6–17
- September 28–October 9.\*

\*These ordering periods are subject to change. Wait for official communication from the VFA Program regarding actual start and end dates of the quarterly ordering period.

**17. Q: How many vaccines can we order?**

A: Prior to ordering, participating clinics must thoroughly assess the number of doses needed for their VFA-eligible population. Approval of orders is based on available funding and supplies, the number of doses your clinic has in inventory, and the number administered since your last order. Please avoid vaccine waste from expiration.

**18. Q: Our organization has multiple clinics. Should we order 317-funded VFA vaccines for the organization or each site?**

A: Each VFA clinical site within a health organization needs to submit its own VFA order.

**19. Q: Do we have to use data loggers for monitoring vaccine storage temperatures?**

A: Yes. You must use data loggers now to meet the requirements for both VFA and VFC, as noted in the Provider Agreement Addendum.

**20. Q: May we track VFA inventory using an approved immunization registry such as [CAIR](#), or do we use the [Daily Usage Log](#) and the [Physical Inventory Form](#)?**

A: If the data needed to complete the [Daily Usage Log](#) and the [Physical Inventory Form](#) is entered into CAIR *and* is easily retrievable, then CAIR may be used to track VFA inventory. For sites exchanging EHR data, the inventory function has to be turned on.

**21. Q: Are vaccine transfers between VFA sites allowed?**

A: Yes. VFA sites may only transfer doses to another VFA site or a Local Health Department. Sites must contact their Senior Field Representative to request approval for transfers.

**22. Q: What should we do if we have 317-funded VFA vaccine that is expiring soon?**

A: At least six months prior to the expiration of VFA vaccines which your practice may not be able to use, please:

- Notify the Central Office at 1-877-243-8832 and follow up with an e-mail to [my317vaccines@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:my317vaccines@cdph.ca.gov).
- Place the short-dated vaccines towards the front of the vaccine storage unit to make sure that you use those doses first.
- To use the vaccine before it expires, implement strategies described in [Take Action to Use Expiring VFA Vaccine](#) and [Take Action to Prevent Vaccine Loss](#).
- Contact VFC/VFA prior to making any decisions regarding the viability of VFA vaccines.

**23. Q: What else should we know about accountability for 317-funded VFA vaccines?**

A: VFA program providers:

- Must manage their vaccine inventory effectively to prevent negligent vaccine loss.
- Are accountable for all VFA vaccines upon receipt and must be able to provide documentation to support their numbers.
- Must report vaccine accountability numbers with each vaccine order to receive new vaccines.
- May be held financially responsible for the replacement of VFA vaccines that
  - They cannot account for or
  - Spoil or expire due to provider negligence.

**24. Q: Does the VFA Program conduct site visits?**

A: Yes, as outlined in the [Provider Agreement](#), authorized representatives of the VFA Program will be permitted to visit your facility in order to review compliance with program policies and procedures.

**25. Q: I have another question not covered here. Whom do I contact?**

A: Please email us at [my317vaccines@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:my317vaccines@cdph.ca.gov) with any questions!