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
    - Community Health Centers (CHCs)
- 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 sometimes referred to as Section 317-funded VFA vaccines. Most vaccines routinely recommended for adults by the federal Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) are available.

The VFA Program runs from **January 1 through December 31**; the program will be extended as funding permits. Clinics may continue using 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, Tribal Health Centers, and CHCs 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, and
- Current enrollment in the California Immunization Registry (CAIR) or a local immunization registry (e.g., 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 Q18).

II.   PATIENT ELIGIBILITY

4. **Q: Which patients are eligible to receive 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.

   For more information, refer to VFA Eligibility Based on Insurance Status.

5. **Q: How should we document patient eligibility to receive VFA vaccines?**
   A: The patient's eligibility criteria, whether the patient is uninsured or underinsured and their date of birth, must be documented at every immunization visit using your Electronic Health Record (EHR). Please refer to the 317 Eligibility Screening Record for eligibility verification requirements. Sites utilizing an EHR that exchanges data with an immunization registry must ensure that all VFA doses are captured in the registry as "317 Eligible LHD or HDAs only."

6. **Q: Who is NOT eligible to receive 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 a 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

7. **Q: Are patients on Medicare eligible for 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 VFA Eligibility Based on Insurance Status.

8. **Does the Inflation Reduction Act change VFA eligibility?**
   A: No, the eligibility criteria for the VFA Program will remain the same.

   The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) included key provisions that address longstanding gaps in vaccination coverage for Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries by eliminating out-of-pocket expenses for recommended adult vaccines. For more information, refer to VFA Eligibility Based on Insurance Status.

9. **Q: Are adults enrolled in Medi-Cal eligible to receive 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.

10. Q: Are adults enrolled in the Family PACT program eligible to receive VFA vaccines?

A: It depends. Family PACT is not insurance coverage, so patients who are enrolled in Family PACT and are uninsured/underinsured are eligible for VFA vaccines. However, patients are not eligible if they have public or private insurance that covers vaccines and be enrolled in Family PACT.

Effective July 1, 2022, HPV vaccine will be added as a covered benefit for Family PACT patients ages 19 through 45 years. We strongly encourage you to utilize this benefit for VFA-eligible, Family PACT patients where HPV vaccination is recommended. Please contact the Family PACT program (Family.Pact@dhcs.ca.gov or 916-650-0414) with questions.

11. Q: Are adults enrolled in the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) eligible to receive VFA vaccines?

A: It depends. ADAP is not insurance coverage, so patients who are enrolled in ADAP and are uninsured/underinsured are eligible for VFA vaccines. However, patients are not eligible if they have public or private insurance that covers vaccines and be enrolled in ADAP.

The ADAP formulary includes many ACIP-recommended vaccines, and we strongly encourage you to utilize these vaccines for VFA-eligible patients enrolled in ADAP. Please see the ADAP Formulary for more information regarding vaccines covered by ADAP.

12. 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, County Medical Services Program (CMSP), etc. are not health insurance. Patients in these programs are eligible to receive VFA vaccines. Refer to the List of County Safety Net Programs for Uninsured.

13. Q: May VFA vaccines be given to immigrants and refugees?

A: It depends. 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.

14. Q: Where can we find offices that offer VFA vaccines?

A: Both patients and offices can utilize the VFA Provider Locations tool to find where VFA vaccines are offered.

15. Q: May VFA vaccines be given to family members of pregnant women?

A: Yes, if they meet the eligibility criteria related to their insurance status.

16. 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.

III. VACCINE ORDERING, HANDLING & STORAGE, AND INVENTORY

17. Q: How do I order 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 (VFA) 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.

18. Q: What VFA vaccines are currently available?

A: The following VFA vaccines are currently available in limited quantities*:
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Human papillomavirus (HPV)
- Meningococcal Conjugate (MenACWY)
- Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)
- Pneumococcal Conjugate (PCV20)
- 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.

19. Q: Can we order flu vaccine through VFA?

A: The VFA program usually does not offer 317-funded flu vaccine to VFA providers. VFA providers should work with their Local Health Department to request state-funded flu doses.

20. Q: How frequently may my clinic order VFA vaccines?

A: Participating clinics can order VFA vaccines during a two-week period at the beginning of each quarter. See the VFA webpage for exact dates under "Ordering" section heading.*

*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.

21. Q: Can I submit a supplemental order for VFA?

A: The VFA Program does not offer supplemental orders. The two-week quarterly ordering periods are the only open windows to order VFA vaccines. Orders cannot be placed between ordering periods and providers should only submit one order during the two-week ordering period.

22. 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.

23. Q: Our organization has multiple clinics. Should we order VFA vaccines for the organization or for each site?
A: Each VFA clinical site within a health organization needs to submit its own VFA order.

24. 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 and Program Participation Requirements at a Glance.

25. 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 must be turned on.

26. 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. For more information regarding transfers please see Take Action to Prevent Vaccine Loss.

27. Q: What should we do if we have 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.
- 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 Prevent Vaccine Loss.
- Contact VFC/VFA prior to making any decisions regarding the viability of VFA vaccines.

28. Q: What else should we know about accountability for 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.

29. 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.

30. Q: I have another question not covered here. Whom do I contact?
A: Please email us at my317vaccines@cdph.ca.gov with any questions!