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TO: California Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program Providers

FROM: Sarah Royce, MD, MPH, Chief *S Royce*  
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SUBJECT: 2019 VFC Program Provider Operations Manual (POM)

## OVERVIEW

The California Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program [Provider Operations Manual](#) (POM) has been updated for 2019 to reflect current VFC Program participation requirements as outlined during the 2019 VFC Recertification process. This communication highlights key changes and clarifications as a result of updates to the [2019 VFC Program Provider Agreement](#) and its corresponding [Provider Agreement Addendum](#). The attached PDF file contains replacement pages and instructions for updating your existing 2018 hard copy. You may also download a complete electronic version of the updated manual on [EZIZ.org](#).

## ABOUT VFC'S PROVIDER OPERATIONS MANUAL

This document outlines current VFC participation requirements, corresponding procedures, and any recommended best practices in order to guide your participation in the VFC Program according to federal guidelines.

As you update your current manual, this is also a great opportunity to review changes with staff responsible for vaccines, make sure new clinic staff are familiar with this resource, and ensure that your clinic is aligned with outlined policies and procedures.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR UPDATING YOUR VFC PROVIDER OPERATIONS MANUAL

We have attached the new pages in a single 40-page document for your convenience. Replace the outdated pages in your 2018 POM immediately. Note: because each chapter begins with "page 1," look to the page headers to ensure replacement pages are inserted in the correct chapters.



Store your POM in your VFC Program binder, along with other VFC-related documents. Keep the binder where staff who work with vaccines can refer to it easily.

## **SUMMARY OF UPDATES AND CHANGES IN THE 2019 POM**

### **Chapter One – THE VFC PROGRAM (replace pages 7-11)**

- VFC Vaccines: Clarifies requirements related to access to and administration of non-routine vaccines to VFC eligible populations (Provider Agreement Addendum #14B). VFC providers agree to ensure that VFC-eligible children have access to non-routine, ACIP-recommended vaccines when indicated or when requested by patients.
- Training and Support: Updated to reflect current addendum requirements related to training requirements and recommendations, including vaccine transport drills (Provider Agreement Addendum #2G), for enhancing competency and readiness of clinic staff responding to vaccine storage and handling emergencies. Practice for a potential vaccine transport situation through *simulated* packing, and preparation for vaccine relocation as outlined in the clinic's Routine and Emergency Vaccine Management Plan.
- Quick Start Guide: Clarifies daily, weekly, monthly, and other routine and recommended tasks.

### **Chapter Two – PATIENT VACCINATIONS (replace pages 11-14 and 23-24)**

- Conducting Eligibility Screening & Documentation: Table 4 addresses Health-Care Sharing Ministries. A child enrolled in a Health-Care Sharing Ministry (HCSM), where members of an organization collectively share the cost of their members' medical care, may receive VFC vaccines if VFC eligibility criteria are met by the patient. Sharing ministries are not considered insurance plans. Instead, a member of a HCSM may submit incurred medical bills to the sponsoring organization for payment assistance; e.g., any vaccine administration fees paid by the parent.
- Administering Vaccines: Provides instructions to not refer VFC patients to other facilities for the administration of any ACIP-recommended vaccines (including flu) (Provider Agreement Addendum #14A). It also highlights new instructions to ensure that VFC-eligible children have access to non-routine, ACIP-recommended vaccines when indicated or when requested (Provider Agreement Addendum #14B).
- Billing for Vaccine Administration: Reflects updates related to California VFC Program "Provider Agreement Addendum" #14F: Never bill parents who are unable to pay the waived vaccine administration fees. The Vaccine Administration Fees section expands on this requirement further. Providers must waive the administration fee if the patient or parent is unable to pay the fee when the service is received. The provider cannot bill for any waived administration fees at a later time. Administration fees may not be billed after the date of

service. Unpaid administration fees may not be sent to collections. Also, note a correction on page 23 for billing uninsured and underinsured patients.

### **Chapter Three – VACCINE MANAGEMENT (replace pages 9-14; 47-52; and 67-70)**

- Most of the topics in the Vaccine Management chapter reflect updated addendum requirements in their corresponding “Program Requirements” sections. Additionally, language has been updated throughout this chapter to incorporate auto-dispensing units as a category for vaccine storage units, and define how they meet each of the VFC Program’s vaccine storage and temperature monitoring requirements (Provider Agreement Addendum #3A).
- Vaccine Storage Unit Specifications: Clarifies specifications for manual-defrost freezers (Provider Agreement Addendum #3B). Manual-defrost freezers are acceptable as long as there is access to an alternate VFC-compliant storage unit to temporarily store frozen vaccines while defrosting the freezer. Temporary storage of VFC-supplied vaccines in a cooler is unacceptable.
- Configuring Vaccine Storage Units: Highlights instructions for defrosting manual-defrost freezers related to Provider Agreement Addendum #3B.
- Data Logger Specifications: Clarifies requirement for battery-operated back-up digital data loggers (more than one unit may be needed depending on practice size/vaccine volume) for emergency vaccine transport (Provider Agreement Addendum #5C).
- Configuring Data Loggers: Updates instructions to help providers create folders to store downloaded temperature data files on practice computers; provides instructions for packaging data loggers to send for calibration testing.
- Receiving Vaccine Deliveries: Highlights practice requirement to have appropriate staff available to receive vaccines at least one day a week (other than Monday) and for at least four consecutive hours (Provider Agreement Addendum #8G).
- Storing Vaccines: References to zoster as a frozen VFC vaccine have been removed. The current zoster vaccine, Shingrix<sup>®</sup> is a refrigerated product.
- Monitoring Storage Unit Temperatures: Clarifies requirements for VFC-approved mass vaccination or outreach clinics (Provider Agreement Addendum #10B). Vaccine temperatures must be monitored and recorded every hour utilizing VFC’s hourly temperature log. Data logger temperature files must be downloaded (or summary report if available) and attached to the transport log.
- Taking Action for Temperature Excursions: Clarifies instructions to respond to all data logger alarms (Provider Agreement Addendum #10C); provides new instruction not to administer vaccines until manufacturers determine vaccine viability (Provider Agreement Addendum #11E).

- Transporting Vaccines: Clarifies that vaccines transported without proper temperature monitoring devices and corresponding documentation of temperature monitoring are deemed non-viable (Provider Agreement Addendum #13I).
- Responding to Vaccine-Related Emergencies: Clarifies steps to take in the event of appliance failure, power outage after hours, planned short-term outage, and planned/unplanned long-term outage.
- Conducting Off-Site Clinics: Clarifies requirements for mass vaccination and outreach clinics and mobile units.

#### **Chapter Four – VACCINE ORDERS (replace pages 19-22)**

- Preparing Practices to Fight Flu: New topic added to support VFC providers in implementing successful strategies to reduce the impact of influenza disease among patients. Highlights include the implementation of techniques to improve flu vaccination coverage among practice patients, making strong vaccine recommendations, and identification of high-risk groups within the practice for priority vaccination.

#### **Appendices (replace entire 6-page Provider Agreement Addendum)**

- 2019 California VFC Program “Provider Agreement Addendum”.

If you have any questions about these changes or updates, please contact the VFC Program at 877-2GET-VFC (877-243-8832).

Enclosures

2019 POM Replacement Pages