Background

The Vaccines for Children Program, established by an act of Congress in 1993, helps families by providing free vaccines to doctors who serve eligible children 0 through 18 years of age. The VFC program is administered at the national level by the US. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) through the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases. CDC contracts with vaccine manufacturers to buy vaccines at reduced rates. Enrolled VFC providers are able to order vaccine through their state VFC Program and receive routine vaccines at no cost. This allows them to provide routine immunizations to eligible children without high out-of-pocket costs.

The California Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program is managed by the California Department of Public Health, Immunization Branch.

How do I get vaccines?

One of our VFC Field Representatives will visit your practice and review the program requirements and verify that you are in compliance with all requirements before vaccine can be shipped. After you are approved, you will order vaccines monthly, bimonthly, or quarterly depending on the size of your practice. The vaccines are shipped directly to your office by national distributor, McKesson Specialty.

Which vaccines are covered?

VFC providers can order most routine childhood vaccines. New vaccines, including new combination vaccines approved by the FDA and recommended by the ACIP, are also supplied to enrolled providers through the VFC Program. See current Vaccine Order Form for the latest information.

What children are eligible?

To be eligible, children must be 18 years of age or younger and meet any one of the following criteria:

1. Eligible for Medi-Cal or Child Health and Disability Program (CHDP)
2. Uninsured
3. American Indian or Alaskan Native
Your office must record the patient's eligibility status in his/her chart. Children who have health insurance that does not cover immunizations may receive VFC vaccines, but only at federally qualified health centers or rural health clinics.

Children enrolled in the Healthy Families program (California’s Children’s Health Insurance Plan) are not VFC-eligible.

Who can be a VFC provider?

Any California-licensed M.D., D.O., or health care organization serving VFC-eligible children can become a VFC provider. The VFC Program has earned high marks from California doctors for making it easy to provide high quality care to their patients.

Enrollment in Medi-Cal or CHDP is not required. Providers are not required to accept children solely because the children are eligible for the VFC Program.

Program Requirements

VFC providers are required to comply with CDC’s Standards for Pediatric Immunization Practices. Providers are visited periodically by a VFC Field Representative who will conduct a Quality Assurance Review (QAR). During the QAR the rep will assess the provider’s compliance with CDC’s standards as well as other VFC program requirements.
California Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program

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