

MODULE

1

OVERVIEW

Bureau of Immunization-Vaccines for Children Program

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MODULE 1 - Overview

Background

The Florida Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program is a federally funded program that provides vaccines at no cost to children who might not otherwise be vaccinated because of inability to pay. The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 created the VFC Program as a new entitlement program, required as part of each state's Medicaid plan. The program was officially implemented in October 1994 as part of the President's Childhood Immunization Initiative. Funding for the VFC Program is approved by the Office of Management and Budget and allocated through the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMMS) to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Children who are eligible for VFC vaccines are entitled to receive pediatric vaccines recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) through passage of VFC resolutions.

Florida began its VFC Program in October 1994 under the administration of the Department of Health, Bureau of Immunization. The VFC Program purchases the vaccines under contract by the Bureau of Immunization and supplies them to enrolled VFC providers at no cost. Similarly, the VFC Program enrolls providers who are not Medicaid providers, but who provide immunizations to federally-vaccine-eligible or state-vaccine-eligible children.

The VFC Program represents an unprecedented approach to improving vaccine availability nationwide by making federally purchased vaccine available to both public and private immunization providers. As the program enters its second decade, it is becoming increasingly recognized for its successes in raising immunization coverage rates among high-risk children and reducing disparities in access to health care. The VFC Program has also helped reduce physician referrals for immunizations to public clinics.

Highlights

The VFC Program:

- Provides public-purchased vaccine for eligible children at no charge to VFC-enrolled public and private providers in all states, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.
- Covers vaccines recommended by the ACIP through passage of VFC Resolutions.
- Saves parents and enrolled providers out-of-pocket expenses for vaccine.

- Provides cost savings to states through bulk purchase of vaccine using CDC contracts at lower prices and eliminates state-to-state variations in price.
- Eliminates or reduces vaccine cost as a barrier to vaccinating eligible children.
- Reduces the practice of referring children for vaccination from the private sector to the public sector.

About This Guide and Other Resources

The Florida VFC Program intended this Operations Guide as a resource for the management and operation of the VFC Program. A copy of this handbook is located on the VFC website at <http://www.immunizeflorida.com/vfc/>. You can also find a series of frequently asked questions (FAQs) about different aspects of the VFC Program on the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/vfc/projects/default.htm>.

The VFC Program will post updates to this guide on the Florida Bureau of Immunization website at <http://www.immunizeflorida.com/vfc/> as we have notices of changes to VFC policy, notices of vaccine shortages, new recommendations by the ACIP, new vaccines available to the program, or updates to vaccine reporting policies and procedures.