



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Larry Hogan, Governor - Boyd Rutherford, Lt. Governor - Van Mitchell, Secretary

March 1, 2016

VFC Vaccine Provider,

This letter is to inform you about major changes to the Maryland Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program that will become effective in 2017.

The Maryland VFC Program is a federally-funded program that provides vaccines at no cost to children who otherwise might not be vaccinated because of an inability to pay. Currently, the national VFC program covers the purchase of \$4 billion in vaccines each year. Because the VFC program is need-based, strong accountability and program stewardship among VFC providers are essential to maintaining a robust program.

As the cost of childhood vaccines increases and immunization programs become more complex, there is a greater need to ensure strict adherence to program guidelines. To improve accountability for VFC vaccine distributed to provider offices and to prevent waste, fraud and abuse, the Maryland VFC Program will implement the program and policy changes below.

Effective January 1, 2017:

1. VFC Providers will be required to report vaccine doses administered to ImmuNet, the Maryland immunization information system.
2. VFC Providers will be required to order all VFC supplied vaccines, including influenza and specialty vaccines (e.g., DT, PPV23, Meningitis B), through ImmuNet.

The Maryland VFC Program believes these programmatic changes will support your existing efforts to be effective stewards of VFC vaccines. Additionally, it should simplify the VFC vaccine ordering process. For the first time in the history of the Maryland VFC program, providers will be able to confirm vaccine orders and track vaccine shipments directly through ImmuNet.

As you may know, ImmuNet is a free, web-based system that confidentially and securely maintains vaccination records of persons of all ages. Since 2004, ImmuNet has helped providers in Maryland avoid redundant vaccinations, locate vaccination histories, and track vaccination rates for children. Recently, it has become a resource for adult patients as well.

Immunization information systems, like ImmuNet, also are beneficial because they allow for rapid generation of official immunization records that are used by schools and colleges, health departments, and other health care providers. In addition, these information systems are extremely valuable for responding to vaccine-preventable disease outbreaks, such as the multi-state measles outbreak associated with Disneyland.

To prepare for the 2017 changes, Maryland VFC recommends the following:

If your office is already enrolled/registered with ImmuNet:

1. Check your access to ImmuNet by signing in to ImmuNet.
2. Call or email the ImmuNet Help Desk if you are not able to sign in or forgot your username/password.
3. Ensure that your office staff are authorized and appropriately trained to use ImmuNet.
4. Enroll in future webinars and training sessions to learn how to order VFC vaccines through ImmuNet.

If your office is not enrolled/registered with ImmuNet:

1. Please enroll to use ImmuNet as soon as possible. Enrolling is easy.
 - Go to the ImmuNet website at tinyurl.com/mdimmunet
 - Scroll down to “Start Using ImmuNet Today”.
 - Complete the online enrollment form.
 - Once we receive your form, we will email your ImmuNet user name and password.
2. For those without Electronic Health Records (EHR) systems, you can report your vaccination data by sending a flat file or enter the data manually into ImmuNet. Contact the ImmuNet Help Desk for guidance.
3. For those with EHRs, your vendor can help you set up automatic reporting from your EHR (federal funding may be available).

ImmuNet Help Desk

Email: dhmh.mdimmunet@maryland.gov

Phone:

410-767-6606		410-303-8421	410-935-9295
Allegany	Kent	Baltimore	Frederick
Anne Arundel	Queen Anne’s	Baltimore City	Montgomery
Calvert	St. Mary’s	Harford	Prince George’s
Caroline	Somerset	Howard	
Carroll	Talbot		
Cecil	Washington		
Charles	Wicomico		
Dorchester	Worcester		
Garrett			

In the coming months, Maryland VFC will send updates, implementation tips, and webinar training announcements to help you prepare for the 2017 policy changes. Check your email/fax for these future updates. **Please do not delay in enrolling for ImmuNet or contacting the ImmuNet Help Desk for assistance.** We are here to support you.

Thank you for your continued commitment to improving the health of Maryland’s children.

Sincerely,



Greg Reed, MPA, Program Manager
Maryland Center for Immunization