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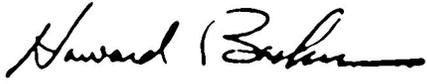
State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
California Department of Public Health



ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
Governor

Date: September 9, 2007 IZB-FY0708-02

TO: California Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program Providers

FROM: Howard Backer, MD, MPH, Chief Immunization Branch 

SUBJECT: Updated Meningococcal Conjugate Vaccine (MCV4) and Varicella Recommendations

This letter updates information regarding meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV4) and varicella vaccine.

1. MENINGOCOCCAL CONJUGATE VACCINE (MCV4)

In June, 2007, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) voted to expand their recommendation for meningococcal conjugate vaccine. Meningococcal conjugate vaccine is now recommended for all adolescents 11-18 years of age at the earliest opportunity, with routine administration at 11-12 years of age and catch-up for those 13-18 years of age who have not yet received MCV4. There are no problems with vaccine supply, so please order enough vaccine for your 11-18 year olds. MCV4 should be administered throughout the year and is required by many colleges before freshman admission.

2. VARICELLA VACCINE

Final recommendations for the second dose of varicella vaccine have been published and can be accessed at: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5604a1.htm>. There are no major changes from the Provisional Recommendations that we referenced in the August 11, 2006 letter. A second dose is routinely recommended at 4-6 years, but should be given to any VFC eligible child or adolescent that previously only received one dose.

MMR-V will remain unavailable for at least the remainder of the year. Single antigen varicella (Varivax) vaccine is shipped directly from Merck & Co. and Merck has informed us that there are delays in shipping due to increased demand. Providers should expect to receive their orders 5-6 weeks after placing them with the VFC office.

3. Proper Storage Protects Your Vaccine and Patients

Proper storage of vaccines continues to be an extremely important responsibility of each provider:

- MCV4, an inactivated vaccine exposed to freezing temperatures will be irreversibly damaged.
- Live varicella vaccine, however, must be stored frozen at 5° F or below.
- Please consider using separate refrigerator (without freezer) and freezer (without refrigerator) units for the appropriate storage of vaccines.

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