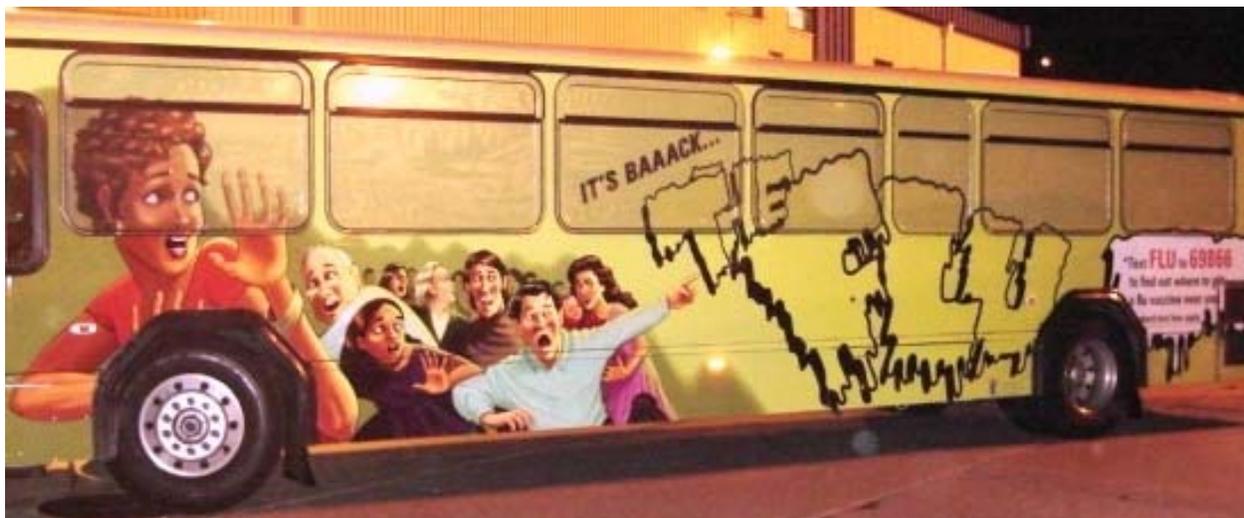




Immunization Branch, California Department of Public Health, 850 Marina Bay Parkway, Building P, Richmond, CA (510) 620-3737

To: Health Officers
Immunization Program Coordinators
Communicable Disease Control Officers
California Immunization Coalition Members
Other interested health care professionals

October 22, 2008



Influenza Vaccine Promotion Continues through the New Year

Influenza season has arrived, and it's time to get vaccinated. Vaccine manufacturers will produce up to 150 million influenza vaccine doses in the U.S. this season. With this unprecedented supply, every effort should be made to vaccinate anyone who wants protection against influenza.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) has expanded its recommendations for influenza vaccine to include children 6 months through 18 years of age.

The ACIP also recommends influenza vaccine for:

- health care workers
- pregnant women
- people 50 years of age and older

- people of any age with certain chronic medical conditions
- people who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities
- people who live with or care for
 - children younger than 5 years
 - adults older than 50 years
 - chronically ill persons

The new recommendation for annual universal childhood immunization provides an opportunity to reduce transmission of influenza in communities throughout California. To reach teens and young adults, the Immunization Branch is collaborating with the Alameda and Contra Costa County health departments to conduct a pilot text messaging campaign from October 2008 through February 2009.

Several busses in these counties will have large advertisements that encourage people to obtain information about nearby locations for flu vaccinations. By using their cell phones to text a “key word” to the number in the ad, “texters” will be connected to a voice message that lists upcoming county-sponsored flu clinics. Results of the pilot will be evaluated to assess the feasibility of similar efforts in the future.

All Requests Met for VFC Flu Vaccine

There is good news this influenza season for Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program participants. An initial supply of VFC influenza vaccine arrived in early October. All pending vaccine requests from VFC-enrolled providers have been met. Initial vaccine requests were approved based on the total number of doses received by each site during the previous influenza season, plus an additional 25% to meet the new ACIP recommendation to vaccinate children six months through 18 years of age. More vaccine shipments are expected in late October or early November. Providers are encouraged to continue to place supplemental orders as needed, regardless of frequency.

Some Novartis Flu Vaccine Syringes Lack Safety Needle

The California Department of Public Health has learned that one of the Novartis Flu Vaccine products distributed nationwide lacks a safety device that can protect the user from needlesticks. This product was labeled as having a pre-filled syringe; however, the label did not indicate that the pre-filled syringe had a permanently affixed 5/8” needle. Cal/OSHA requires employers to use syringes and needles with built-in engineered sharps injury protection. Needlestick injuries expose healthcare workers and others to bloodborne pathogens that cause illnesses such as HIV/AIDS and hepatitis.

The CDPH Immunization Branch has worked with the FDA and Novartis to resolve the situation for vaccine purchased by CDPH.

Novartis has agreed to replace the pre-filled syringes lacking safety devices with syringes with a “luer” connection, so that safety needles can be attached. For more

information or to request replacements, contact your supplier or Novartis at (800) 244-7668. For more information, see www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/ohb/Documents/novartis.pdf.

WIC Influenza Vaccine Campaign Yields Promising Results

Immunizing health care workers against influenza can prevent client illness, deaths and institutional outbreaks. In 2007, the Immunization Branch implemented the “**BEAT IT!**” influenza vaccine contest campaign to increase influenza immunization rates among California WIC staff and health care workers. The campaign is modeled after a San Diego County initiative. Last year, Alameda, Los Angeles, and Tulare Counties piloted the campaign. Local WIC worksite teams of staff and volunteers competed for recognition and prizes based on speed, creativity, and participation in influenza immunization.

The results are in! Immunization coverage and awareness *increased* among campaign participants.

- At the beginning of the campaign, less than half (48%) of the participants believed that influenza vaccine is effective. By the end of the campaign, that number had jumped to 64%.
- Before the campaign began, only 37% of those surveyed said they were vaccinated against influenza during the previous influenza season.
- At the beginning of the campaign, only 42% said they were planning to get vaccinated during the upcoming season. As a result of the contest, 71% were vaccinated.

Phase II of the *BEAT IT!* project is being planned for the 2009-10 influenza season. It will incorporate lessons learned from the pilot. To obtain a copy of the report of the “*BEAT IT!*” *Staff Influenza Promotion Project*”, contact Debbie Starbuck at (510) 620-3759 or Debbie.Starbuck@cdph.ca.gov.

No Cold Medicine for Kids: A Chance to Plug Influenza Vaccine, Hand Hygiene

In [recent national news](#), manufacturers of cold medicine announced that they are discouraging parents from giving cold medicines to children younger than four years of age. This policy change is important to public health professionals because it provides another opportunity to remind parents of two ways to keep their kids healthy during respiratory disease season—good hand hygiene (frequent hand washing and the use of an alcohol-based hand sanitizer) and annual influenza vaccination.

Throughout the winter, public health professionals need to continue spreading the word about the importance of influenza vaccine for people of *all* ages. The influenza season often peaks as late as March, sometimes even later. A flu shot given as late as February or March can still provide protection.

When reminding people to get vaccinated, those in public health also need to encourage healthy habits such as hand hygiene. The Immunization Branch is helping

health departments, coalitions, and health care providers reach out to populations at risk for serious influenza complications by making available a variety of materials and resources. To access updated respiratory disease prevention or influenza vaccine promotional materials, visit the Branch's [influenza prevention materials page](#) or contact Jenny Bailey at Jenny.Bailey@cdph.ca.gov.

Hib Vaccine Supply Shortage

The past year's national Haemophilus influenzae Type b (Hib) vaccine shortage is expected to continue well into 2009. In the meantime, California's VFC allocations of single-antigen Hib vaccine significantly decreased in October, making it critical for providers to adhere to the CDC recommendations to defer the booster dose for the majority of children who are not at high risk for invasive Hib disease.

Until supplies return to normal levels, providers should continue to temporarily defer administering the routine Hib vaccine booster dose, which is given at age 12-15 months. Children at high risk for Hib disease due to of asplenia, sickle cell disease, immunodeficiency syndromes, or who are American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) should continue to receive the Hib booster dose at age 12-15 months, even during the vaccine shortage. VFC has limited supplies of PedvaxHIB[®] vaccine available for clinics serving primarily American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) children. PedvaxHIB[®] provides more rapid protection against Hib disease in those populations.

VFC allocations for Pentacel[®], the new DTaP-IPV-Hib combination vaccine, have increased. To ensure that patients are protected against Hib, this combination vaccine should be administered to infants for their primary series at 2, 4, and 6 months of age when sufficient supplies of single antigen Hib are **not** available.

Due to limited allocations, providers will experience slight delays receiving their Hib vaccine shipments. In some cases, Hib vaccine may be shipped separately from the rest of the vaccine order.

Zoster Vaccine Covered for Older Medi-Cal Beneficiaries

Effective October 1, 2008, zoster vaccine is a Medi-Cal benefit for adults 60 years of age and older. The zoster vaccine, Zostavax[®], is restricted to one vaccination per recipient's lifetime. The CPT-4 code for zoster vaccine is 90736.

Thousands Participate in UC Berkeley Immunization Awareness Event

More than 3,000 college students learned something outside of the classroom this fall—they learned how important immunizations are in keeping them healthy.

The Immunization Branch partnered with UC Berkeley's Tang Center and the Berkeley Public Health Department for this event, which was held during the campus' Caltopia and student health center open house in late August as new students were arriving on campus. Immunization Branch Chief Howard Backer and meningitis survivors Melanie Benn and Jonathan Deguzman spoke to students about the importance of vaccines for college-age students. Students were encouraged to win prizes by playing "Immunization Jeopardy."



Immunization Registry Night at the Ballpark

On September 24, the San Francisco Immunization Coalition and the San Francisco Giants continued their five-year community partnership by hosting "Immunization Registry Night" at AT&T Park. This event helped promote the continued use of the California Immunization Registry (CAIR) by immunization providers in San Francisco. The program highlighted the advantages of using a population-based immunization registry to effectively track vaccine use. Awards were given to clinics and community partners that have been instrumental in helping to bring the immunization registry to San Francisco. Giant's mascot Lou Seal stopped by the event to lend his support for CAIR.



Branch Staff Changes

Don Oliva, VFC Senior Customer Service Representative, was promoted to VFC Central Office Team Lead. In his new role, Don will oversee the Customer Service and Data Entry Staff. Don has been with the VFC Program since 2002 and has extensive experience operating its customer service call center.

Erik Smith joins the Immunization Branch as the new VFC Field Representative in the Los Angeles area. Erik completed his BA in biology at Boston University and recently obtained an MPH from Loma Linda University. He brings a wealth of experience in international and domestic program research and development, and in education delivery. Erik's experience includes Peace Corps work in Mozambique.

Brandi Thompson is the Immunization Branch's new Office Technician. Brandi previously worked at the CDPH Microbial Diseases Laboratory and at the Department of Justice. Her duties include assisting the VFC program and the Branch with a variety of administrative projects.

Providers from Coast to Coast Adopting EZ-IZ Curriculum

EZ-IZ, the training and resource website for providers in California's Vaccines for Children (VFC) program, went "live" in August. Since then, feedback about the site and its content has been overwhelmingly positive. Immunizers, as well as those responsible for immunization skills training, note the depth and breadth of the site's resources. A Supervisor of Immunizations for one California VFC provider said, "After reviewing the material...I have come to the decision that we will be using this training for all staff who administer immunizations."

EZ-IZ' utility has already spread beyond the VFC program and outside of California. The E-learning Coordinator for a large medical center in New Hampshire said she was "very impressed" with EZ-IZ and asked for permission to include the interactive online lessons, *Preparing Vaccines* and *Administering Vaccines*, in the center's online immunization education program.

Local health departments in Alameda and Contra Costa counties have already decided to use the EZ-IZ Curriculum to train immunizers in their mass vaccination flu clinics.

This month all California VFC providers will receive a mailing that includes information about how their practices can benefit by the myriad resources on EZ-IZ, a one-stop shop for immunization skills training, job aids, VFC forms, up-to-the-minute news about vaccine availability, and much more. To explore EZ-IZ, go to www.eziz.org.

VFC Recertification Process Goes Online this Fall!

The Branch is pleased to announce that VFC is launching a new process that enables providers to complete the annual VFC recertification online. A federal requirement specifies that every provider site receiving publicly purchased vaccines from the VFC Program must be recertified annually.

In previous years, clinics had to estimate the number of children they would vaccinate in their practice during the coming year. The e-Recertification program will automatically calculate those estimates, which will be based on information in the VFC database. Providers will have the option of revising the estimates before submitting them. VFC providers can begin using the new online process in early November. A small number of paper-based forms will be available, upon request, for providers with limited Internet access.

The new VFC website, www.EZIZ.org, will host the new “e-Recertification” program. Recertifications submitted by the December 15 deadline will be valid for 2009. A mailing with more detailed information about the new process will be sent to VFC-enrolled providers during the coming weeks.

Kindergarten and Child Care Assessments and KRS

The *Immunization Assessment Kindergarten Students Report* was due to the CDPH Immunization Branch by October 15. Immunization Coordinators will soon be receiving a list of schools within their counties that have not yet submitted the report.

Child Care Centers and Head Start facilities were to send *The Annual Immunization Report on Children Enrolled in Child Care Centers* (CDPH 8108) to their local Immunization Coordinators by October 15. Immunization Coordinators have received email instructions for aggregating the data, as well as the Microsoft Excel workbook *Child Care Assessment Report*. The workbook includes *Facility Summary Sheets* (CDPH 8389) and *Summary Report* (CDPH 8388). The *Child Care Assessment Report.xls* file is due by email to the appropriate Field Representative by December 1 and to the Immunization Branch by December 15.

The 2008 [Kindergarten Retrospective Survey](#) (KRS) results are now available online. For more information about the survey, contact Madina Sharifi at Madina.Sharifi@cdph.ca.gov (510) 620-3757, or Teresa Lee at Teresa.Lee2@cdph.ca.gov (510) 620-3746.

Upcoming Events, Conferences, and Observances

Date	Event	Partners/ Sponsors	Website/ Contact Info
Oct. 19-25, 2008	International Infection Prevention Week	Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC)	www.infectioncontroltoday.com/hotnews/international-infection-prevention-week-2008.html
Oct. 20-24	National Medical Assistants Week	American Medical Technologists	www.amt1.com/site/epage/9364_315.htm
Oct. 21, 10:00-11:00 a.m. PST	Vaccinate Your Baby: A Campaign Update	Every Child By Two (ECBT)	Send e-mail to izta@aed.org with a subject line, "Sign me up for the Every Child By Two TA Call"
Oct. 23-25 San Diego	SOPHE Annual Meeting, "Catching the Wave: Changing the Tides of Health Education and Health Promotion"	Society for Public Health Education	www.sophe.org/
Oct. 24-25 Emeryville	6 th National Travel Medicine Conference	Kaiser Permanente	https://www.signup4.net/Public/ap.aspx?EID=APHY147E
Oct. 25-29 San Diego	APHA Annual Conference, Public Health Without Borders	American Public Health Association	www.apha.org/meetings/highlights/
Oct. 28, noon – 1 p.m.	CIC Education Hour: "Influenza prevention across the lifespan"	California Immunization Coalition	www.immunizeca.org
Nov. 10 Sacramento	<i>HPV Vaccine Summit</i> (by invitation only)	CMA Foundation	Carrie A. Fletcher, Program Associate, CMA Foundation (916) 779-6625
Nov. 17-18 Concord	Epidemiology & Prevention of Vaccine-Preventable Diseases (Live 2-day course; CME/CEU Credit available)	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)	www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/immunize/Pages/ImmunizationTrainingandEvents.aspx
Nov. 20-21 Orange	Epidemiology & Prevention of Vaccine-Preventable Diseases (Live 2-day course; CME/CEU Credit available)	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)	www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/immunize/Pages/ImmunizationTrainingandEvents.aspx
Dec. 8-14	National Influenza Vaccination Week	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)	www.cdc.gov/flu/NIVW/

New Educational Materials and Online Resources

Resource	Type of resource	How to access the information
Talking with Parents about Vaccine Safety	Fact sheet	http://immunizeca.org/documents/IMM-915_web.pdf
Vaccine Safety: 10 Tips for Parents	Fact sheet	http://immunizeca.org/documents/IMM-916_web.pdf
Vaccine Safety: Responding to Parents' Top 10 Concerns	Fact sheet	http://immunizeca.org/documents/IMM-917_web.pdf
New guidelines for Vote & Vax clinics	PDF file	Guidelines: www.voteandvax.org/PDF/TechnicalAssistanceGuide.pdf . Information about Vote & Vax: info@voteandvax.org , or call (888) 868-5580.
Influenza vignettes from CDC	Online video	www.youtube.com/user/cdcflu
Enhancing the Continuum of Care during a Pandemic Influenza	Webcast (on-demand through Jan. 14, 2009)	http://63.64.44.135 (click on the webcast tab and once the webcast loads, right click to enlarge the view.)
Clear Answers & Smart Advice about Your Baby's Shots	Article re-print	www.immunize.org/catg.d/p2068.pdf
Influenza Vaccine Identification Guide 2008 (IMM-859)	Flyer	www.eziz.org/PDF/IMM-859.pdf
Storage Guide for Combination Refrigerator/Freezer Units (IMM-213B)	Chart	www.eziz.org/PDF/IMM-213B.pdf
Storage Guide for Refrigerator-only units and Stand-alone freezers (IMM-213)	Chart	www.eziz.org/PDF/IMM-213.pdf
New equipment guidelines for VFC providers	Letter	www.eziz.org/PDF/Storage_and_Handling%2008_15_08_(2)KH.pdf