



Date: October 9, 2018

DPH Information Memo BCD-2018-16

To: Local Health Departments and Tribal Health Centers

From: Stephanie Schauer, Ph.D.  
Immunization Program Manager

## Use of State-Supplied Vaccine

### PLEASE DISTRIBUTE WIDELY

The Wisconsin Immunization Program has supplied vaccine to local health departments and tribes through two federally funded programs for the purpose of ensuring individuals who are uninsured or underinsured have access to routinely recommended vaccines in accordance with the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices guidance. These two programs are the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program, a federal entitlement program, and the newly named Vaccines for Adults (VFA) program (which provides vaccines to eligible individuals using federal section 317 funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)).

This memo serves to reiterate the eligibility criteria for individuals receiving vaccine under these two programs, including the policy changes for the federal section 317 funding that were effective as of October 1, 2012 and continue to this day.

#### **Children (individuals less than 19 years of age)**

Children must be screened in accordance with the federal screening guidelines for the VFC program, and children who fit these criteria may be vaccinated with VFC vaccine. The screening criteria that must be used for this program can be found on the CDC [website](#), or by contacting the Wisconsin VFC coordinator, Lynette Hanson, at [Lynette.Hanson@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Lynette.Hanson@wisconsin.gov).

#### **Adults (individuals 19 years of age or older)**

Local health departments and tribes are required to screen adults for insurance status, as well as ensure they meet any age-or risk-based criteria for a particular vaccine, as outlined in the Wisconsin Immunization Program Policy and Procedure Manual.

The insurance screening for adults should be handled in the same manner as the VFC program – the person's word should be taken regarding insurance coverage. Local health departments may assist individuals to understand their insurance status and/or coverage by recommending that individuals call the number on their insurance card or visit their insurance provider website.

## **Insured Individuals**

Local health departments may assist these individuals in determining which immunizations are needed (e.g., with their permission, looking the individual up in the Wisconsin Immunization Registry and printing out their record). However, individuals (of any age) whose insurance covers the cost of vaccine are not eligible to receive state-supplied vaccine (i.e., federally purchased 317 vaccine) even if their insurance includes a high deductible or co-pay, or the plan's deductible had not been met. They are to be referred to their private provider.

Alternately, the local health department may choose to purchase vaccine outside of the 317 funds, use that supply for their insured patients, and bill the insurance carrier.

Of note, the former practice of vaccinating an insured individual once with state-supplied vaccine and then referring them to their provider in the future is not allowed. While not vaccinating an insured individual unfortunately results in a missed opportunity for that individual, at the same time, it creates the opportunity (the dose of vaccine) for someone who meets the eligibility criteria (e.g., not insured) and does not have other means to be vaccinated.

## **Exceptions**

Due to different funding sources or situations, such as mass vaccination exercises or outbreaks, there may be times when exceptions to these rules are allowed, and certain individuals may become eligible to receive state-supplied vaccine. The most current information on any such exceptions is posted in SharePoint in the Division of Public Health Immunization tab, in a document titled "State-Supplied Vaccine Eligibility Exceptions."

Making sure that people of all ages receive all their vaccinations is one of the most important things we can do to ensure the health of family, friends, and others in the community—and we thank you for working with us to protect the health of Wisconsin residents. Local health departments are the backbone of public health and will still continue to play a vital role in immunizing the uninsured and underinsured population of Wisconsin, as well as continuing to promote immunization across the lifespan to ensure a healthy Wisconsin.

If you have questions regarding this policy, please contact Stephanie Schauer at 608-264-9884.