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Date: January 9, 2015

To: Providers Caring for Adult Patients

From: Jeffrey P. Davis, MD, Chief Medical Officer and State Epidemiologist for Communicable Diseases and Emergency Response

Re: Provision of Tdap Vaccine to Elderly Adults at Local Health Departments

Vaccines help keep your adult patients healthy and your vaccine recommendations make a difference to your patients. We appreciate your strong recommendation for tetanus-diphtheria-acellular pertussis (Tdap) vaccination and your desire to make the vaccine affordable for your elderly patients.

Wisconsin local health departments serve the adult community by providing vaccines to certain uninsured and underinsured persons using state-supplied vaccine. However, Tdap is currently available to adults aged ≥ 19 years, without any insurance screening requirement, to assist with pertussis outbreak control given the surge of pertussis during recent years. In a non-outbreak situation Tdap would only be provided at the local health department to uninsured and underinsured adults. Therefore this special provision of state-supplied Tdap was intended to make the vaccine more accessible for adult patients. Recently, this special provision has resulted in many elderly patients on Medicare being referred to local health departments for Tdap vaccination. If continued, this practice would quickly expend our supply of Tdap vaccine available for adults statewide.

In the spirit of continuing to make Tdap accessible for elderly adults while maintaining an equitable distribution of Tdap vaccine to local health departments across Wisconsin, providers should limit their referrals for Tdap vaccine receipt to adults who cannot afford to receive the vaccine at their provider's office or a pharmacy. Tdap vaccine coverage is available for Medicare Part D recipients. Please encourage your patients to check with their insurance carrier to determine their coverage for Tdap vaccine and whether it is more economical to receive the vaccine at their provider's office or a pharmacy.

Providers should take the following steps to encourage their patients to get vaccinated:

1. Screen patients for vaccination status.
2. Recommend the needed vaccines to their patients.
3. Administer the needed vaccines, or refer the patient to a provider who is able to vaccinate.
4. Document the vaccination in the patient's medical record and submit this information to the Wisconsin Immunization Registry (WIR).

If you have questions or need additional assistance, please contact Stephanie Borchardt at 608-266-9923 or Stephanie.Borchardt@wi.gov.