



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Public Health

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Acting Division Director

November 6, 2013

MEMORANDUM

TO: North Carolina Immunization Program (NCIP) Participants

FROM: Beth Rowe-West, RN, BSN, Head *BRW*
Immunization Branch

SUBJECT: Important: 2013 Holiday Shipping Schedule

The purpose of this memo is to provide important details regarding the upcoming holiday vaccine shipping schedule. Adherence to this schedule will help avoid delayed shipments and the risk of damaged vaccine during the upcoming holiday season. Please carefully review the schedule below, and plan to order enough vaccine in November and/or December to vaccinate your patients through at least **the second week in January 2014**.

November 2013 Ordering and Shipping

- With the exception of state government holidays (November 11, 28, and 29), NCIP will accept vaccine orders throughout the month of November.
- Providers will **not** receive vaccine shipments from McKesson Specialty or Merck from Friday, November 22 through Friday, November 29, 2013.

December 2013 Ordering and Shipping

- To accommodate McKesson Specialty and Merck holiday shipping schedule, Monday, December 2 through Monday, December 9, 2013 are the **ONLY** days that the North Carolina Immunization Branch will be accepting vaccine orders **for the entire month of December**. Unfortunately, orders received after 3pm on Monday, December 9 cannot be processed until Thursday, January 2, 2014.
- Vaccine shipments *may* arrive at your office as late as Thursday, December 19, 2013. Providers will **not** receive vaccine from McKesson Specialty from Friday, December 20 through Tuesday, December 31, 2013.

January 2014 Ordering and Shipping

- The North Carolina Immunization Branch will resume regular order processing on Thursday, January 2, 2014.

Note: Any orders faxed between **Tuesday, December 10, 2013 and Thursday, January 2, 2014 will be rejected and will result in the provider having to place another order.**

Safeguarding Vaccine

Please take special precautions to safeguard your vaccine as **replacement orders will be difficult and/or impossible to process during this time.**

- Post a current Disaster Recovery Plan on or near the vaccine storage equipment and update annually. Ensure that all staff read and understand what to do in the event of refrigerator or freezer malfunctions, power failures, natural disasters, or other emergencies.
- Read and manually record temperatures twice each day; once at the beginning and again at the end of the day. Record from an interior thermometer with a current certificate of calibration in accordance with National Institute of Standards and

www.ncdhhs.gov • www.publichealth.nc.gov • www.immunize.nc.gov

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Technology (NIST). Post the temperature log on or nearby the vaccine storage unit and maintain copies of temperature logs for 3 years.

- Maintain refrigerated vaccines at 2° to 8°C (36° to 46°F), with an optimal temperature of 5°C (40°F).
- Maintain frozen vaccines between -50°C and -15°C (-58°F and +5°F) with an optimum of -20° C (-4°F).
- Store water bottles against the inside walls and in the doors of the refrigerator. Keep frozen coolant packs in the freezer along the walls, back, bottom, and inside the freezer door.
- Place vaccine to prevent overcrowding and to allow for proper air circulation around the vaccine. Store vaccines in the middle of the compartment away from the coils, walls, floor, and cold air vent. Do not store vaccines in the door or vegetable bins.
- Rotate vaccine stock weekly and place vaccines with shorter expiration dates in front of those with longer expiration dates. Remove expired vaccine immediately. Notify NCIP at least four months before the expiration date to avoid restitution for improper inventory management.
- Order vaccine based on actual need of eligible children served by the practice.
- Physically distinguish between public and private vaccine stock and maintain complete, accurate, and separate stock records.
- Store vaccine in their original containers. Use only the specific diluent provided by the manufacturer.

With the exception of state government holidays (*November 11, 28, and 29, 2013; December 24, 25, and 26, 2013; and January 1, 2014*), the Immunization Help Desk will be available at **1-877-873-6247** throughout the months of November, December, and January to answer your questions and offer assistance.

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