

Subject: Provider Vaccine Choice from the North Carolina Immunization Program (NCIP)

Effective: August 1, 2011

Policy:

Any vaccine available on contract through the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program may be ordered through the NCIP. Therefore, providers with a product preference may choose a particular brand as long as it is available through the VFC program.

The NCIP will make every attempt to honor provider choice whenever possible, but the following situations will result in limited brand choices:

- Because the manufacturing and distribution systems for influenza vaccine established by vaccine manufacturers and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are unique and require significant planning to avoid delays, the NCIP must limit brand choice for influenza vaccine.
- Because funding limitations for adult vaccines, special initiatives, and other non-VFC vaccine uses may affect product availability through the NCIP, brand choice may not always be possible for such programs.
- Because technical changes to the North Carolina Immunization Registry (NCIR) may require planning, clinical review, and implementation by technology staff, new or changing vaccines may not be available immediately upon approval by the VFC program.
- The Branch Head has the authority to remove any vaccine from availability via the NCIP at his or her discretion.

If a brand chosen by a provider is not available for any reason for an extended period of time (such as during supply shortages), the unavailable vaccine will be removed from NCIR immediately, and the NCIP may take the following action under the authority and approval of the Vaccine Distribution Manager or Branch Head:

- If an identical vaccine is available, the alternate brand may be shipped without notification (e.g., VAQTA® and Havrix®). Providers are expected to make use of the equivalent vaccine to the best of their abilities until vaccine supplies normalize.
- If a similar, but not equivalent vaccine is available, the provider will be asked to approve a replacement before any vaccine is shipped (e.g., Cervarix® and Gardasil®).

- If a combination vaccine becomes unavailable, the provider will be asked to approve a shipment of single-antigen equivalents before the order is placed with CDC.

In any situation where a vaccine has become temporarily unavailable through the NCIP, providers may borrow vaccine from their private supply. Borrowing and replacing vaccine must be done in accordance with the stipulations outlined in the memo dated December 22, 2009. This memo may be found on the NCIP website at:

<http://bit.ly/BorrowingReplacement>

The NCIP will honor provider preference for packaging (e.g., syringes vs. vials) whenever possible. If syringes become unavailable for an extended period of time, the NCIP will ship vials without notification to the provider. If vials become unavailable for an extended period of time, the NCIP will ship syringes to any provider ordering less than 50 doses of vaccine in vials. Providers with vial orders greater than 50 must approve a shipment of syringes as a replacement before the order is placed with the CDC.

Any time that a provider chooses to utilize a different brand of vaccine, the physician bears the responsibility for use all remaining doses of the "old" vaccine before the expiration date, or safely transferring that vaccine to another active provider in the NCIP. Allowing a vaccine to expire because the provider has chosen to change brands will be considered a failure to rotate vaccine, and that provider will be subject to the NC Vaccine Restitution Policy.

Should an error occur in the keying or shipping of an order, every attempt should be made to use or relocate the vaccine shipped in error. Regardless of the nature of the error, the provider should make every attempt to use the excess vaccine and NCIP staff should make every effort to assist that provider in relocating that vaccine to another active provider should they be unable to use it before the expiration date. In the unlikely event that vaccine cannot be relocated to another active provider, the Vaccine Distribution Manager or designee will be responsible for arranging for the vaccine to be picked up either by NCIP staff or the vaccine distributor.


Approved by

10/3/11
Date