

Dear Providers,

This newsletter is meant to keep you up to date on issues related to vaccines quickly and easily. We welcome your comments and questions; please email us at [immunization.program@ventura.org](mailto:immunization.program@ventura.org)

### **General Best Practice Guidelines for Immunization**

CDC has recently released updated General Best Practice Guidelines for Immunization, available on the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) web page. The General Best Practice Guidelines for Immunization replace the General Recommendations on Immunization, last published in the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) in 2011. The General Best Practice Guidelines for Immunization goes beyond vaccination recommendations to give providers guidelines on vaccination practice. The document will help vaccination providers to assess vaccine benefits and risks, use recommended administration practices, understand the most effective strategies for ensuring that vaccination coverage in the population remains high, and communicate the importance of vaccination to reduce the effects of vaccine-preventable disease. Unlike previous versions of this document, the updated version was released only as an online report. Future updates for the document will be much faster, giving vaccination providers the most up-to-date guidance on vaccination practice. A printer-friendly version of this document from the ACIP's website is attached. We encourage you to share and review the updated General Best Practice Guidelines for Immunization report with health care professionals in your practice. Continuing education (CE) credit is available for the General Best Practice Guidelines for Immunization.

### **CDC publishes article about Hepatitis Awareness Month and Testing Day**

The month of May is designated as Hepatitis Awareness Month in the United States, and May 19th is Hepatitis Testing Day. During May, CDC and its public health partners work to shed light on this hidden epidemic by raising awareness of viral hepatitis and encouraging priority populations to get tested. CDC published [Hepatitis Awareness Month and Testing Day—May 2017](#) in the [May 12 issue of MMWR](#). The complete article is reprinted below.

May 19th is National Hepatitis Testing Day in the United States to emphasize the importance of testing persons at risk for hepatitis B virus (HBV) and hepatitis C virus (HCV) infections, most of whom are unaware of their infection status. Recognizing the effectiveness of testing and other preventive and treatment measures, the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine recently set goals for the elimination of HBV and HCV as public health threats in the United States.\*

HCV is the most common form of viral hepatitis in the United States and in 2013, accounted for approximately 19,000 deaths per year, a number that was greater than that of 60 other nationally notifiable infectious diseases combined. During 2010–2015, HCV incidence increased by 294% with the highest rates among young persons who inject drugs (PWID).†

This issue of *MMWR* includes two reports describing trends in HCV incidence and the availability of HCV prevention and treatment services that stop transmission. In the first report, only three states had comprehensive laws providing full access to HCV preventive and treatment services for PWID. The second report estimates rates of HCV infection among pregnant women in the United States and Tennessee; in the United States, HCV rates nearly doubled during 2009–2014, and in Tennessee, the rate in 2014 was approximately three times the national rate. Data from both reports emphasize the importance of viral hepatitis surveillance to identify communities at risk for HCV and public health policies that make available

interventions that prevent HCV transmission and disease.

\* <http://www.nationalacademies.org/hmd/reports/2017/national-strategy-for-the-elimination-of-hepatitis-b-and-c.aspx>

† <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/statistics/index.htm>

[Access the complete May 12 issue of MMWR](#), which includes the HCV reports referenced above.

### **May is Toddler Immunization Month!**

Are all the toddlers in your practice up-to-date on their vaccines? A baby's 1st birthday is not just an occasion for cake; it's an important health milestone. One-year-olds need a well-child check-up and routine vaccines. Children between 12 and 15 months old are recommended to receive Hep A, MMR, Varicella, Hib, and PCV. Kids 15-18 months old need a 4th dose of DTaP. Some patients might need a catch-up dose or a flu vaccine, so check every child's shot record at every visit. **Never miss an opportunity to vaccinate.**

[EZIZ.org](#) has lots of great staff resources. Download and review these today:

- Immunization Timing Block Schedule for 2017
- Immunization Schedule with Combination Vaccines – recently updated!
- Hepatitis A Fact Sheet – recently updated!
- MMR Fact Sheet – recently updated!
- Varicella Fact Sheet – recently updated!
- Hib Fact Sheet – recently updated!
- DTaP Fact Sheet – recently updated!

### **VFC PROVIDERS:**

VFC Customer Service Center Closures:

The VFC Program Customer Service Center will be closed during the following dates:

- Monday, May 29, 2017 (Memorial Day Holiday)
- Tuesday, June 6, 2017 from 9am to 2:30pm (Staff Meeting)
- Wednesday, June 7, 2017 (All-Day Staff Meeting)

Orders will continue to be received during these times and normal business hours will resume after these closures. **TIP:** Upon order submission, please allow up to 15 business days for the processing and delivery of your vaccine request. Make sure to place your vaccine request with sufficient inventory on hand (3 weeks recommended).

### **2016 - 2017 Influenza Vaccine Update:**

Although this year's flu season is coming to an end, please keep the following information in mind:

- Flu activity continues to decrease, though sporadic activity may continue until the season is over.
- If you have patients 6 months and older in your practice who have not yet received their annual influenza vaccine or who may need their second dose and/or you have children with a long-term health condition like asthma, diabetes and heart disease, please ensure they are fully vaccinated and optimally protected against influenza.

- VFC has adequate flu vaccine supplies still available to support your continuing flu vaccination efforts.
- Check your flu vaccine expiration dates as some doses will expire in late May or June.
- Flu vaccine is good until expiration. **Do not** remove viable vaccine doses from your storage unit prior to expiration. This will result in preventable negligent vaccine wastage.
- Upon expiration, remove expired doses from your vaccine storage unit immediately. Complete and submit a VFC Return Form and request a return shipment label by logging into your MyVFCVaccines account on [www.eziz.org](http://www.eziz.org).

Email [immunization.program@ventura.org](mailto:immunization.program@ventura.org) for information and registration.

Keep in mind that all VFC communications are always posted on VFC's website, [www.eziz.org](http://www.eziz.org)

You can also view this information on <http://www.vchca.org/for-health-care-providers-cmr-tb-forms> or follow



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