



Alaska Immunization Program

Update from the Program Manager



Greetings!

The Alaska Immunization Program is reviving the IMMUNE-NEWS, a newsletter that was published many years ago in partnership with the Vaccinate Alaska Coalition. Our target audience is primarily Alaska's healthcare professionals, healthcare organizations, public health agencies, and others involved in providing immunization services. The newsletter will provide an update on state immunization program

activities.

IMMUNE-NEWS issues will feature several articles on various topics including an Immunization Update, VacTrAK Immunization Information System, Vaccine Management, Vaccine Funding, Assessment Feedback Incentives and Exchange, Immunization Helpline Q & A, Perinatal Hepatitis B, School and Child Care Vaccine Requirements, and Resources & Training Announcements. Issues will be published quarterly. Individuals can subscribe to receive an email or text update whenever a new issue becomes available by going to

https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/AKDHSS/subscriber/new?topic_id=AKDHSS_14.

After entering in an email address, you will be prompted to subscribe to a topic. IMMUNE-NEWS updates will be sent to subscribers of the Vaccination Updates topic under Public Health. After making this selection please be sure to select SAVE. You can easily update your contact information or change subscriptions at any time by modifying Subscriber Preferences.

The Alaska Section of Epidemiology is currently evaluating national, state, and local immunization coverage rate data to better understand the chronicity and nature of Alaska's immunization coverage deficiency. This evaluation will be used to identify key areas in need of improvement and to develop recommendations to increase vaccination rates based upon evidence based best practices.

To enhance continued access to vaccines for Alaskans, House Bill 310 was introduced during Alaska's 27th Legislative Session and signed into law on May 22, 2012. This law provides a 3-year stopgap measure to provide state funding to help offset the state's dramatic decrease in federal Section 317 of the U.S. Public Health Service Act (317) funds for vaccine procurement through 2015. These funds are currently being used to procure and distribute childhood vaccines recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) to underinsured children, and to provide select state-supplied vaccines for uninsured/underinsured adults. The Alaska Immunization Program continues to receive sufficient federal Vaccines for Children Program (VFC) dollars to

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Alaska Immunization Helpline

Phone: 888-430-4321 (toll free)

907-269-8088 (in Anchorage)

Email: immune@alaska.gov

Immunization Helpline FAQ's.

Which vaccinations do I need to travel abroad?

The CDC has an excellent traveler health resource available online with destination specific vaccine recommendations and travel health notice information. For more information please visit:

wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/

provide all ACIP-recommended vaccines for VFC eligible children.

The Alaska Division of Public Health is excited to announce that during the 28th Legislative Session, SB 169 was introduced and passed providing a new vaccine financing solution. On June 18, 2014 the Governor signed SB 169 establishing a State Vaccine Assessment Council and creating a vaccine assessment account starting January 1, 2015. This law forms the framework to return Alaska to a universal vaccine purchase status for children and adults with a phase in period over the next three years. Until the bill is implemented on January 1, 2015 the Immunization Program will continue to comply with HB 310 requirements. We will keep you updated on this new vaccine program as more information becomes available.

We look forward to opportunities to foster more collaboration in order to improve immunization rates and protect Alaskans from vaccine preventable disease.

I would like to thank healthcare providers for your support to fulfill our mission and keep our communities healthy.

Gerri Yett
Manager, Alaska Immunization Program

How do I report a medication error?

Reports can be submitted online through the VAERS website (vaers.hhs.gov/index) or on a paper VAERS report form. You may use photocopies of the form to submit reports. You can obtain pre-addressed postage-paid report forms via fax, mail, or email by calling the VAERS Information Line at (800) 822-7967. Completed paper VAERS forms may be sent via fax to (877) 721-0366 or by mail to VAERS, PO Box 1100, Rockville, MD 20849.

Hot Topic



August is National Immunization Awareness Month.

The purpose of this observance is to highlight the importance of immunizations, one of the top 10 public health accomplishments of the 20th Century, according to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC).

While immunizations have significantly reduced the incidence of many serious infectious diseases, vaccination rates for some diseases are not meeting national public health goals. And we need to remind people that immunizations aren't just for children. They are needed throughout our lifetime.

Please visit www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niam.html to get toolkits to help raise awareness about immunizations.

VAC TRAK

VacTrAK is a web-based immunization information system provided by the Alaska Division of Public Health. It is a confidential, population-based, computerized system that maintains immunization information for Alaskans of all ages. It helps public health agencies and healthcare providers to make informed decisions to improve the health of individuals and the entire community.

VacTrAK is accessible from any PC that has internet access and a web browser: www.vactrak.alaska.gov VacTrAK can also exchange data electronically with existing electronic medical record or practice management systems.

VacTrAK can be used to obtain consolidated immunization records for patients, forecast future immunizations, and produce official immunization records to meet school and child care facility requirements. VacTrAK can also be used to track immunization completion

rates and generate automated reminder/recall notices for your patients.

VacTrAK has a Vaccine Ordering and Management module to allow providers to order vaccine electronically, manage public and/or private vaccine stock, and submit state required reports.

New in VacTrAK for 2014, users can reset forgotten passwords immediately by email. To activate automatic password reset you must enter your email address in personal settings. VacTrAK support recommends adding your email address right away so the feature is activated before you need it! Refer to instructions in the Important Notices section of the VacTrAK Home page to learn how.

Notice of regulation change:

All healthcare providers are required to report administered immunizations to VacTrAK, the State of Alaska Immunization Information System, within 14 days of administration. [7 AAC 27.650](#).

This new reporting requirement is applicable for any vaccine administered; including state supplied and privately purchased vaccine. For more information refer to the [Overview of New Public Health Reporting Regulations, Effective December 29, 2013](#).

Vaccine Management

Back-to-school and influenza seasons are approaching! Storage units will contain increased amounts of vaccine so it is very important that you maintain all appropriate storage and handling requirements, including recording temperatures twice a day on the most current version of the [Vaccine Temperature Log](#), downloading and submitting the LogTag graphs weekly to the Vaccine Depot and managing vaccine inventory online in VacTrAK. See the [2014 Alaska Vaccine Distribution Handbook](#) for all storage and handling requirements.

Providers enrolled to receive state-supplied vaccine will not need to submit an influenza pre-book this year. You will be notified when the influenza vaccine arrives at the Vaccine Depot. You can then place vaccine orders in VacTrAK as needed throughout the season.

The certifying provider, vaccine coordinator and the back-up vaccine coordinator of all facilities receiving state-supplied vaccine are required to complete an education webinar annually. If you have not submitted your certificate of completion to the Vaccine Depot for the [CDC's You Call the Shots Module 16 Vaccines for Children Program 2014 webinar](#), please do so as soon as possible to prevent any hold or delay on vaccine orders.

School & Child Care Compliance

Religious Exemption Reminder:

Religious exemption forms are valid from July 1 through June 30 each year and must be renewed annually. For compliance purposes, enforcement of annual renewal for children enrolled in summer programs (i.e., summer school, child care) will be begin on July 15.

- The State of Alaska Religious Exemption form with a revision date of March 2013 is required for children whose parents/guardians claim religious exemption status. Previously completed religious exemption forms will **not** be grandfathered.
- Any modification to the wording of the State religious exemption form may invalidate the exemption. Statements indicating philosophical or personal opposition to vaccines will invalidate religious exemption documentation.
- Notarization of the form is required for all children with religious exemptions.

For more information regarding compliance requirements for school and child care attendance visit: <http://www.epi.alaska.gov/id/iz/factsheet/IZReqPacket2013.pdf>



Due to a 'myAlaska' version update, on May 23, 2014 the URL address for Self ImmAGE has changed to <https://SelfImmAGE.dhss.alaska.gov/Welcome.aspx>.

Users of the system will need to update their bookmarks and pop up settings if they haven't already done so. If you have any questions or need Self ImmAGE assistance, please contact the Alaska Immunization Helpline or email: selfimmune@alaska.gov.

AFIX

In 2014, the Immunization Program began implementing a new process for conducting CDC required AFIX site visits.

The strategies used in AFIX are intended to improve providers' immunization service delivery and raise vaccination coverage levels. The process includes:

- Assessment of the healthcare provider's vaccination coverage levels and immunization practices.
- Feedback of assessment results to the provider along with recommended quality improvement strategies to improve processes, immunization practices, and coverage levels.
- Incentives to recognize and reward improved performance.
- eXchange of information with providers to follow up on their progress towards quality improvement in immunization services and improvement in immunization coverage levels.

In the past, Immunization Program staff collected children's immunization histories from chart reviews conducted at individual clinic sites. As directed by CDC, immunization data in VacTrAK is now used to assess provider level immunization coverage rates for select VFC-enrolled providers. Aggregate data and surveys are provided to individual providers telephonically and through email. Immunization program staff collaborates with practice staff to identify strengths and areas in which successful quality improvement strategies can be applied.

To learn more about Alaska's AFIX process, please contact the Immunization Helpline phone number or email address.

You can also learn more about CDC's AFIX approach by visiting CDC's website: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/afix/about/overview.html>.

Perinatal Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection in a pregnant woman poses a serious risk to her infant at birth. Without postexposure immunoprophylaxis, approximately 40% of infants born to HBV-infected mothers in the United States will develop chronic HBV infection, approximately one-fourth of whom will eventually die from chronic liver disease. Preventing perinatal HBV transmission is an integral part of the national strategy to eliminate Hepatitis B in the United States. National guidelines call for the following:

- Universal screening of pregnant women for HBsAg during each pregnancy
- Case management of HBsAg-positive mothers and their infants
- Provision of immunoprophylaxis for infants born to infected mothers, including Hepatitis B vaccine and Hepatitis B immune globulin
- Routine vaccination of all infants with the Hepatitis B vaccine series, with the first dose administered at birth

Perinatal HBV transmission can be prevented by identifying HBV-infected (i.e., Hepatitis B surface antigen [HBsAg]-positive) pregnant women and providing Hepatitis B immune globulin and Hepatitis B vaccine to their infants within 12 hours of birth.

Alaska's perinatal Hepatitis B program is managed through the Alaska Immunization Program. For more information about the program please visit www.epi.alaska.gov/id/iz/hbv/default.htm

Resources & Training

The Alaska Immunization Program is planning to launch a newly designed website soon. An announcement will be made when it becomes available.

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