



The Philadelphia Immunization Program *Special Delivery*

The Philadelphia Department of Public Health
Division of Disease Control

CARMEN I. PARIS, MPH
Interim Health Commissioner

JOSEPH C. CRONAUER
Executive Deputy/Chief of Staff

CAROLINE C. JOHNSON, MD
Director, Division of Disease Control

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PLEASE READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED BELOW CAREFULLY, AS IT HAS FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR VFC PROVIDERS WHO WASTE VACCINE.

When the Philadelphia VFC program was created in 1994, only a handful of vaccines were included in the childhood and adolescent immunization schedule. Today, 13 years after its inception, VFC offers more than 20 vaccines to VFC providers. These vaccines are not free. The City of Philadelphia purchases these vaccines via a federal grant and, in turn, passes along the vaccine to providers free of charge.

Although the majority of providers are responsible executors of VFC vaccine, clear guidelines regarding negligent waste of vaccine have been established. The policy is included in your VFC manual, and reprinted below. At a time when the price of vaccines continues to climb, enforcement of the VFC wastage policy has become essential.

Effective March 1ST 2007, the VFC program will begin enforcing its policy on vaccine wastage due to negligent storage and handling by not absorbing the costs of replacement vaccine. VFC providers experiencing such losses will be expected to replace wasted or spoiled vaccine through private purchase (see VFC manual for more information). The Philadelphia VFC Program understands that some losses (equipment failure and power outages) are unavoidable. However, in other situations, vaccine losses have been due to improper monitoring of storage temperatures, over-ordering, not closing a refrigerator door tightly, or failure to report and return short-dated vaccine, resulting in loss due to expiration.

The VFC Wastage policy is designed to ensure proper accountability of VFC vaccines. Under this policy, providers must:

- Report all vaccine losses promptly.
- Purchase, through the vaccine manufacturer(s), replacement doses of vaccine, as instructed by the VFC Program.
- Submit a copy of the receipt, showing the vaccines, lot number(s), and number of doses to the VFC Program. Proof of payment will be required.
- Use this privately purchased vaccine to vaccinate their VFC-eligible patients. The VFC Program may ask to see records documenting administration of this vaccine to VFC-eligible children.

VFC enrolled providers are responsible for ensuring that his or her staff take all possible measures to prevent vaccine loss. The following procedures should be followed:

- Provide adequate vaccine storage, and monitor storage conditions.
- In the case of a vaccine storage problem, do not assume that vaccine is spoiled. Contact the VFC Program immediately for advice before discarding any vaccine.
- Check expiration dates regularly. Rotate vaccine stock regularly by moving the vaccine stock with the earliest expiration dates to the front, and putting the vaccines with the longest expiration dates to the back. *Never use out-dated vaccines!*
- Report to the VFC Program (via a Short Dated Form) any doses of vaccine that will expire within 60 to 90 days, that you will not be able to use prior to expiration. The VFC Program will be able to transfer the vaccine to another provider, where it can be used prior to expiration. *Providers should not transport vaccine to another location.*
- Do not over-order vaccine. Providers should not attempt to stockpile vaccine as a hedge against future shortages. This frequently leads to vaccine wastage, and can contribute to vaccine shortages and limited supply for children needing vaccine in other practices. *Providers should order only enough vaccine to meet their needs for 2- 3 months.*

If you have short-dated vaccine and want to ensure that your office is not required to reimburse the VFC program, you must submit a short dated form to VFC 60 to 90 days prior to vaccine expiration. These forms must be faxed to Christine Wilson at 215-685-6510. It is the responsibility of the provider to confirm receipt of short dated form.