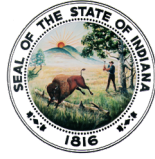




**Indiana  
Department  
of  
Health**



Eric J. Holcomb  
*Governor*

Kristina M. Box, MD, FACOG  
*State Health Commissioner*

Date: March 1, 2023

To: Publicly Funded Vaccine providers

From: Ahmad Abdalla, Immunization Division Deputy Director  
Tracy Brunette, Vaccine ordering and Accountability Coordinator

Re: Expansion of Publicly Funded Vaccine Categories

In November 2019, the Indiana Department of Health (IDOH) announced the expansion of the Vaccine for Children (VFC) Eligibility Categories to comply with federal vaccine purchasing requirements. To properly document VFC-eligible children enrolled in Indiana's Children's Health Insurance Plan (CHIP), IDOH requires providers enrolled in the VFC program to update and modify their VFC eligibility screening, documentation and reporting processes to the statewide immunization registry, CHIRP. The data reporting requirements support required IDOH accountability to Indiana Family and Social Services (FSSA) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for CHIP vaccines purchased, distributed, and administered through the Indiana publicly funded vaccine program.

**Effective April 3rd, 2023, all VFC providers should have processes in place that screen, document, and communicate CHIP-VFC eligibility to CHIRP, via electronic transfer and/or direct manual entry.**

### **Background**

Indiana Family and Social Services (FSSA) offers several different programs and services under the Indiana Health Coverage Programs (IHCP), including Hoosier Healthwise Package A and Package C.

Hoosier Healthwise Package A encompasses the full array of Medicaid State Plan benefits for children and pregnant women. Package A members do not have copayment or other cost-sharing requirements to receive covered healthcare service.

Hoosier Healthwise Package C – Children's Health Insurance Plan (SCHIP) provides preventive, primary, and acute healthcare coverage to children who meet the following eligibility criteria:

- The child must be younger than 19 years old.

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- The child's family income must be between 158% and 250% of the federal poverty level.
- The child must not have creditable health coverage or have had creditable health coverage at any time during a waiting period lasting no longer than 90 days.
- The child's family must financially satisfy payment of monthly premiums.

Package C members fall under the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). A child determined eligible for Package C is made conditionally eligible pending a premium payment. The child's family must pay a monthly premium to maintain coverage in this program. This insurance coverage qualifies this child as "privately insured", a category that is not federally eligible for vaccines available through the VFC program. Children less than 19 years of age that are uninsured, underinsured, American Indian/Alaskan Native, and/or Medicaid-eligible are automatically eligible for vaccines through the federal VFC program. Children less than 19 years of age who are enrolled in separate state children health insurance plans (CHIP), such as Hoosier Healthwise Package C, can be served through the VFC program if the state so chooses through different vaccine purchasing mechanisms. In this case, IDOH, the state administrator of the VFC program in Indiana, has elected to partner with FSSA to receive the necessary funding to purchase the vaccines for the CHIP children through the Immunization Division. IDOH must comply with this vaccine purchasing program requirement for Indiana CHIP children to continue receiving federal grant funding to administer its state immunization and VFC programs.

### **What does this mean for VFC providers?**

#### **VFC screening and documentation**

As required by the VFC provider agreement to receive publicly supplied vaccines in the state of Indiana at no charge, providers must screen every patient at every immunization encounter to determine VFC eligibility and document any associated eligibility with administered VFC vaccine. Per FSSA, providers are required to verify member eligibility on the date of service. Viewing a member ID card alone does not ensure member eligibility. To ensure Hoosier Healthwise Package C- CHIP children are properly identified as state vaccine VFC-eligible at the time of service, providers must verify member eligibility and review the information. Providers that fail to verify eligibility are at risk of claims being denied due to member ineligibility or coverage limitations. Providers can verify eligibility by using one of the following Eligibility Verification System (EVS) methods:

- Provider Healthcare Portal-online
- Approved vendor software for the 270/271 batch or interactive eligibility benefit transactions
- Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system at 1-800-457-4584



Providers can use information from a member's health card to access eligibility information on the EVS. If a member does not have a member ID card at the time of service, a provider can still verify eligibility if the provider has one of the following:

- The member's IHCP Member ID
- The member's Social Security number and date of birth
- The member's first and last name and date of birth

### **Vaccine Order and Supply**

The vaccines purchased for CHIP children will be distributed and stored with other VFC vaccines so there is no need for providers to maintain a separate CHIP vaccine stock in vaccine storage units. This vaccine is considered public stock. Providers may notice a change on vaccine order slips that includes an additional funding category for CHIP. Providers should continue to reconcile the completeness and accuracy of vaccine shipments using the vaccine order slip. Additionally, providers must receive their VFC vaccine orders electronically via CHIRP VOMS (Vaccine Order Management System) immediately upon arrival to ensure the information correctly populates your CHIRP inventory. As a reminder, providers should also promptly store any refrigerated or frozen vaccine upon arrival to ensure proper vaccine storage and handling, so the vaccine remains viable for your patients.

### **What happens if we are not compliant by April 3rd, 2023?**

Beginning April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023, compliance with all VFC screening categories, including CHIP, and compliance with fraud and abuse policies associated with stewardship of VFC vaccines, will be a priority topic for all program compliance visits conducted by the IDOH Quality Assurance team. Providers that have not incorporated this policy change will receive a finding that will need to be satisfied post-site visit completion or risk a corrective action for non-compliance with VFC requirements.

### **Who can I contact with questions or issues with implementation of this requirement?**

We recognize that the system changes described above can take time to implement. If you or your office have questions, please contact Ahmad Abdalla, Immunization Division Deputy Director, at 317-995-3322 or Tracy Brunette, Vaccine Ordering and Accountability Coordinator, at 317-606-5091. Email correspondence may also be sent to [immunize@health.in.gov](mailto:immunize@health.in.gov).

We sincerely appreciate your continued participation in the Indiana VFC program as we work together to protect Hoosiers from vaccine preventable disease.