

Dear Immunization Partner:

Thank you for your commitment to immunizing the children of North Dakota. Your efforts are vital in helping them to grow up healthy and strong. I urge you to continue your life-saving efforts by signing the attached agreement to provide Vaccines For Children (VFC) vaccine to the underinsured children you see in your practice.

Currently, the Department of Health supplies most vaccines for all children in the state, including those with health insurance. In the future, because of declining federal funds, the Department of Health will be unable to continue to supply vaccinations for North Dakota children who have insurance or who are underinsured and not being vaccinated at rural health clinics (RHCs) or federally qualified health centers (FQHCs). Therefore, providers will need to become aware of and carefully follow federal rules for using Vaccines For Children vaccine.

The Vaccines For Children program is a federal entitlement program that supplies vaccines for children 18 and younger who are:

- Medicaid eligible,
- Uninsured,
- Native American/Alaskan Native, or
- **Underinsured (a child whose health insurance benefit plan does not cover a particular vaccine)**

Children who are Medicaid eligible, uninsured, or Native American/Alaskan Native may be vaccinated at any VFC-enrolled clinic. **However, the VFC program mandates that underinsured children must be vaccinated at an FQHC or RHC.** It is against federal law to use VFC vaccine to vaccinate underinsured children at clinics that are not FQHCs or RHCs.

In order for all private providers and local public health units to be able to vaccinate underinsured children with VFC vaccine in their medical home, it is necessary for an FQHC to delegate authority to vaccinate underinsured children with VFC vaccine on their behalf to each private provider and local public health unit. The NDDoH has been working closely with the Coal Country Community Health Center FQHC in Beulah to delegate this authority.

Enclosed is a Letter of Agreement for Immunization Purposes. By signing and returning the attached agreement, you will receive authority from Coal Country Community Health Center FQHC to vaccinate underinsured children with VFC vaccine at your clinic. It is important that each local public health unit and private provider complete this form and return it to the NDDoH by **May 15, 2007**. The NDDoH will then send all of the completed letters of agreement to Coal Country Community Health Center for signature. When the letter of agreement is complete, the NDDoH will send a copy to your clinic. Once you have received a copy of the completed letter of agreement for immunization purposes from the NDDoH, your clinic may begin vaccinating underinsured children with VFC vaccine.

Until your clinic completes the letter of agreement for immunization purposes, you must refer all underinsured children to an FQHC or RHC for VFC vaccine. Providers who have not been delegated to provide VFC vaccine to underinsured children on

behalf of an FQHC cannot vaccinate these children with VFC vaccine. As you know, this may cause hardship for your patients and their families, which, unfortunately, may cause them to forgo vaccination.

Thank you for working with us to safeguard the health of North Dakota's children. If you have any questions or concerns about this issue, please contact the NDDoH Immunization Program at 701.328.3386 or toll-free at 800.472.2180. We look forward to receiving your signed agreement soon.

Sincerely,

Terry L. Dwelle, M.D., M.P.H.T.M.
State Health Officer

Enclosure.