

BLASTFAX

Important Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Information from the Georgia Vaccines for Children Program
The Chapter has been asked by the Georgia VFC Program to pass on the following message regarding Seasonal Influenza Vaccine.

VFC has received a number of questions about influenza vaccine deliveries. We hope this Q & A will clear up some of the confusion in provider offices.

Q: Why does it take longer to receive VFC flu vaccine? I've had my private vaccine for weeks.

A: While privately purchased flu vaccine is often shipped directly to the provider as soon as it is available, VFC vaccine goes through a longer process. First, it is shipped in increments (partial shipments) to McKesson. McKesson notifies the CDC, where shipment invoices are processed for payment (much like a provider processes shipping invoices for equipment or vaccine deliveries). CDC then goes through a process of allocating vaccine to 'grantees' (Georgia is one of 64 grantees). Each grantee is notified of the quantity and formulations available to them. Once we at the State VFC program receive this notification, we begin entering orders for the amount of vaccine currently available for distribution. At McKesson, orders go through the same process as other VFC vaccine orders, although McKesson has a separate line dedicated to packing and shipping flu orders, which is why flu vaccine comes separately from the rest of your VFC order. Every effort is made to make this process as expedient as possible, but there is, simply put, more to it. This is why providers do not begin seeing VFC flu for 2-3 weeks after receiving privately purchased vaccine.

In addition, Georgia's ordering system experienced several glitches and recovery was slow. We are back on track and shipping vaccine as it becomes available to us.

Q: Why am I getting small shipments of vaccine instead of all at once?

A: In an effort to ship vaccine to provider offices as quickly as possible, we are shipping vaccine as we receive notification of availability – sometimes this will mean orders that a provider will receive several smaller shipments rather than one larger shipment.

Q: I asked for 100 doses of FluMist. I was told I was only going to receive 80 doses and would receive additional injectable vaccine instead. Why is that?

A: VFC places flu orders each year based on a number of factors - anticipated VFC-eligible population, funding, and lessons learned from previous years. The influenza vaccine order placed by Georgia's VFC program for the 2009-2010 season is anticipated to cover the entire VFC-eligible population, even in the light of the current economy and H1N1. A variety of vaccine formulations was ordered in order to maximize the number of doses ordered. This means that 100% of FluMist requests could not be met. Requests were adjusted evenly to allow all providers requesting FluMist to receive at least some FluMist vaccine. Should all presentations of flu vaccine be distributed and an additional order is needed, decisions will be made at that time based on available vaccine, anticipated needs, and available funding.

Q: Since children are a priority group for H1N1 vaccine, should I hold off giving seasonal flu until H1N1 vaccine is available?

A: **NO.** Please begin administering your seasonal flu vaccine as soon as you receive it. Not only will you begin protecting your patients as early as possible, but there may be some degree of cross-protection, and lastly, many factors could affect the timing and availability of H1N1 vaccine. Protect your patients early.