



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES

DAVID L. LAKEY, M.D.
COMMISSIONER

P.O. Box 149347
Austin, Texas 78714-9347
1-888-963-7111
TTY: 1-800-735-2989
www.dshs.state.tx.us

TO: Texas Vaccines for Children (TVFC) Providers

FROM: Saroj Rai, Ph.D. 
Immunization Branch Manager

DATE: April 10, 2013

SUBJECT: 2013 Provider Quality Assurance Site Visits and Unannounced Storage and Handling Visits

The Texas Vaccines for Children (TVFC) Program has implemented a change in the scheduling process and time frame for TVFC Quality Assurance Site Visits. TVFC Quality Assurance Site Visits are no longer scheduled based on an annual review date.

TVFC Quality Assurance Site Visits will be prioritized and scheduled based on the following criteria:

- Historical site visit findings
- Immunization coverage levels
- Provider practice size
- Provider educational needs

A report was released on June 6, 2012, based on a study conducted by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) entitled *Vaccines for Children Program: Vulnerabilities in Vaccine Management*, which explores vaccine storage and handling and inventory management in the Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program. The OIG Vaccine Management Report is a result of routine and planned assessments of the VFC. The report highlights results of an April and May 2011 study investigating the five largest VFC programs of the 64 state, city/territorial immunization programs and a sample of 45 physician offices in each jurisdiction. NOTE: Texas was one of the states selected for this report. The complete report can be viewed at: <http://oig.hhs.gov/oei/reports/oei-04-10-00430.asp>

Findings of the study include:

- The majority of temperatures measured were within required ranges; however VFC vaccine stored by 76 percent of the 45 providers were exposed to inappropriate temperatures for at least 5 cumulative hours during the two week period. Vaccines exposed to inappropriate temperatures can have reduced potency and efficacy.

- Thirteen providers had expired vaccine stored with non-expired vaccines which increases the risk of administration of an expired vaccine.
- In general, the providers did not meet vaccine management requirements or correctly maintain required documentation.
- None of the five selected grantees met all VFC program oversight requirements and results demonstrated that site visits were not effective at assisting providers to meet vaccine management requirements.

As a result of the OIG report and in an effort to safe guard children and vaccines, the TVFC has added Unannounced Storage and Handling Visits for 2013, as required by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The goal of Unannounced Storage and Handling Visits is to provide enhanced education, support, and resources related to vaccine storage and handling to ensure all TVFC children are receiving properly managed vaccines.

TVFC providers may be chosen for an Unannounced Storage and Handling Visit based on any one of the following criteria:

- Loss of publicly purchased vaccine
- Storing publicly purchased vaccine incorrectly
- Not correctly documenting temperature logs
- Vaccine orders not consistent with a provider's patient profile data
- Newly enrolled TVFC Provider

If you have questions, please contact your Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Health Service Region or TVFC Regional Consultant. The Regional Consultant contact information is included below.

Health Service Region	Consultant	Phone	Email
Region 1, 4/5 North and 7	Joshua Hay	(512) 776-6496	Joshua.Hay@dshs.state.tx.us
Region 6/5 South, 9, and 25 (City of Houston)	Shyla Delp	(512) 776-6333	Shyla.Delp@dshs.state.tx.us
Region 8, 11, and 00 (City of San Antonio)	Alma Chavez	(956) 421-5554	Alma.Chavez@dshs.state.tx.us
Region 2, 3, and 10	Shirley Rocha	(512) 776-3417	Shirley.Rocha@dshs.state.tx.us