



Flu Prevention For Summer Travel

Summer brings opportunities for travel, adventure, and cherishing moments with family and friends. Providers and Responsible Entity (REs) should promote [preventive practices](#) against the spread of influenza (flu) to ensure a safe and healthy summer, including:

- Annual flu vaccination
- Unvaccinated people should get their flu vaccine at least two weeks before travel
- Cover mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing
- Wash hands often
- Avoid close contact with sick people
- Pay attention to announcements from the local government in the travel destinations

These preventive measures are particularly important for people at high risk of flu-related complications.

Satisfaction Survey Results

2022 Provider Reenrollment

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) surveys Texas Vaccines for Children (TVFC) and Adult Safety Net (ASN) program providers each year to determine how to best engage providers and improve the programs for the following year.

Providers were asked for feedback on TVFC/ASN program activities occurring between January 2022 and December 2022 on a Likert scale. Providers were asked to rank activities on a scale of 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). Responses were collected through Alchemer Survey Software.

A total of 3,066 surveys were collected and analyzed. The average program ratings were 4.27 for TVFC and 4.36 for ASN.

Significant findings include:

- 4.2 rating for the provider partnership with DSHS
- 4.0 rating for the re-enrollment process for the 2023 TVFC/ASN program
- 4.3 rating for the support, information, and materials provided by the RE

The survey provides DSHS with insight into how to foster relationships with providers within the TVFC/ASN programs. The results of the survey will promote positive policy changes within the TVFC/ASN programs, as well as direct efforts to improve quality.

Changes to Coordinators

To update or change a primary or backup coordinator, providers need to complete and submit [Changes to Enrollment Form](#) to their RE.

Make sure to include the following coordinator info:

- Full name
- Phone number
- Title
- Unique email address (*Each individual accessing Texas Immunization Registry (ImmTrac2) or Vaccination Allocation Ordering System (VAOS) is assigned a username. Usernames must not be shared. For security*)

purposes, each user is required to provide an email address. All email addresses will be verified by the system for uniqueness)

New coordinators joining the [TVFC / ASN program](#) must complete the required training and submit the certificates of completion along with the changes to the Enrollment form, which include:

- 2023 TVFC Vaccine Education Online
- You Call the Shots Module 10 (Storage and Handling)
- You Call the Shots Module 16 (VFC Program)
- Vaccine Allocation Ordering System (VAOS)

Once the trainings and form are completed, providers should submit the Changes to Enrollment Form and all training certificates to their RE in one email.

The RE will handle the submission of information to the Central Office for processing.

Please note, for TVFC/ASN program enrolled sites, it is mandatory to designate a primary vaccine coordinator and at least one backup coordinator to ensure proper handling and storage of TVFC vaccines.

Both coordinators must be physically located at the clinic site and fully trained in routine and emergency policies and procedures.

For further information regarding coordinator changes, please reach out to your RE.

Effective Communication: Building Trust Interactions With Providers



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC](#)) states the importance of effective communication in health care. Open and honest conversations with patients and parents is critical to building trust and improving their understanding of the health care process which may improve their quality of life.

Some of the keys to building trust with patients and parents are:

- *Active listening*: Undivided attention, maintaining eye contact and showing interest through verbal and non-verbal cues. Through active listening, providers may collect relevant information and address misconceptions.
- *Clear communication*: Using plain language instead of medical jargon can simplify complex conversations. Educational materials like diagrams or brochures may improve comprehension.
- *Cultural sensitivity*: Create an inclusive environment that values and respects diverse perspectives and backgrounds. This may be done through multicultural education and fostering open dialogue.
- *Shared decision-making*: Ensure that the patients and parents are actively involved in making decisions about their care. Creating a clear plan or timeline promotes comfort and confidence, ultimately improving the likelihood of future visits.

Vaccine Storage Units and Temperature

TVFC and ASN program providers should ensure the protection of their vaccines by following the TVFC/ASN program storage and handling requirements and reducing the amount of temperature excursions in their facilities.

Storage Units

DSHS recommends the following types of units for vaccine storage, listed in preferential order:

- Pharmaceutical grade/purpose-built unit
- Stand-alone, single-purpose fridge
- Stand-alone, single-purpose freezer
- Combination household unit



If a combination household unit is used, the facility is strongly encouraged to obtain a stand-alone freezer as well. The refrigerated vaccine is to be stored in the household unit, while the frozen vaccine should be stored in the stand-alone freezer. The use of the freezer compartment in a household combination unit is discouraged because this type of unit does not maintain temperatures appropriately. Dorm-style units and small combination refrigerator and freezer units with a single external door are not permitted.

To ensure that the power supply for the vaccine storage unit is protected, TVFC/ASN program providers are required to:

- Plug the storage unit directly into a wall outlet.
Each unit should have its own outlet;
- Post a “Do Not Unplug” sign on or near all electrical outlets where units are plugged in;
- Ensure a “Do Not Disconnect” sign is placed on or near each circuit breaker to prevent an accidental temperature excursion; and
- Ensure a plug guard is used on all units that store TVFC/ASN vaccines, as they are effective tools in preventing the accidental or intentional unplugging.

Temperature Recordings

TVFC/ASN program providers must meet and maintain temperature recording requirements to ensure temperatures are within appropriate ranges. It is required to check, record, and initial all refrigerator and freezer unit temperatures twice daily each day the site is open. Additionally, providers must record the minimum/maximum temperatures for each unit once daily at the beginning of each business day. Temperatures must be recorded manually on [temperature recording forms](#) using the storage unit’s data logger. Maintaining these requirements will help determine a vaccine’s viability in the case of a temperate excursion.

Temperature Excursions

If an out-of-range temperature excursion is observed, the excursion information must be documented, and the following actions must be taken immediately:

- The questionable vaccine must be placed in a vaccine quarantine bag.
- The questionable vaccine must be stored in a unit that can be kept under appropriate conditions.
- A report from the storage unit’s data logger must be generated for discussion with the vaccine manufacturer.
- The vaccine manufacturer listed on the box must be contacted to obtain documentation for the viability of the vaccine.
- The RE must be contacted to report the manufacturer’s vaccine viability determination, submit the manufacturer’s determination letter(s) or online validity results, and complete the [Vaccine Storage Troubleshooting Record](#).

By following these guidelines and promptly taking corrective actions, TVFC/ASN program providers may effectively manage temperature excursions and maintain the integrity of vaccines stored in their units.