



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

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MARK BENTON • Deputy Secretary for Health

SUSAN KANSAGRA • Assistant Secretary for Public
Health Division of Public Health

September 7, 2023

MEMORANDUM

TO: Vaccines for Children Program (VFC) Participants

FROM: Carrie Blanchard, PharmD, MPH, Immunization Branch Interim Director

SUBJECT: VFC Provider Notice of COVID-19 Commercialization Updates

The purpose of this memo is to provide Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program providers with the latest information on the commercialization of the COVID-19 vaccine. Please carefully review this memo in full.

FDA authorization and/or approval and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendation of the updated, monovalent (XBB 1.5) 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine is expected the week of September 11, 2023. [ACIP is scheduled to vote on the 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine on September 12, 2023.](#)

The updated 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine will be included in the VFC Program. Like the introduction of other routine vaccines into the VFC program, providers are expected to begin ordering and administering COVID-19 vaccines to their VFC eligible patients as soon as possible. Vaccines for fully insured patients will need to be purchased following the traditional vaccine procurement pathways.

VFC providers will be allowed to pre-order COVID-19 vaccines in anticipation of FDA's authorization and/or approval and ACIP/CDC's recommendation of the 2023-2024 monovalent COVID-19 vaccine.

- **September 8, 2023:** Pre-ordering opens for **VFC providers** for the 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine in NCIR for their VFC eligible population.
- **September 13, 2023: Estimated Shipments** – McKesson begins shipping Moderna and Novavax COVID-19 vaccine; Pfizer begins shipping their direct ship COVID-19 vaccine.
- **September 13, 2023:** VFC providers who did not pre-order can begin ordering the 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine in NCIR.

Key Points:

- VFC Providers will not be required to enroll in an additional program to receive COVID-19 vaccine for their VFC eligible patients.
- As private purchasing contracts and ordering systems are implemented, there may be delays for providers in procuring private stock COVID-19 vaccine. For this reason, borrowing of COVID-19 vaccine will be allowed. As with other routine VFC vaccines, borrowed doses must be repaid (dose for dose) within one month, following the [VFC borrowing and replacement policy](#).
- Given the uncertainty with COVID-19 vaccine demand and potential for packaging size concerns, providers will not be penalized for COVID-19 vaccine wastage due to expiration or beyond-use-date limitations.
- Only providers enrolled in the [Bridge Access Program](#) or the VFC program will be able to order the 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccines for their eligible populations through NCIR. Vaccines for fully insured patients will need to be privately purchased.
- If you are a current COVID-19 vaccine provider, please note, once the updated 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine is authorized, any remaining bivalent doses on hand will no longer be authorized and will need to be immediately wasted following your agency's disposal policies as well as appropriately wasted in NCIR. Administration of non-authorized products is considered a vaccine administration error and must be reported to the [Vaccine Adverse Events Reporting System](#) (VAERS). Future wastage of the updated 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine will follow normal [VFC wastage/expiration procedures](#) (i.e. unopened vials will need to be sent back to the centralized distributor).

Thank you for your continued commitment to the wellbeing and safety of North Carolinians!

In health,



Carrie Blanchard
Immunization Branch Interim Director