



Alaska Immunization Program

Update from the Program Manager

Happy fall everyone! I hope that you're enjoying activities that the season has to offer and spending time with family and friends.

The Alaska Immunization Program recently had a change in management staff. Matt Bobo, MPH replaced Carmen Springer as the Deputy Program Manager. Carmen left in August to take a position in the private sector. We wish her the best in her new endeavors. Matt comes to us with a broad background of experience in public health and consulting. He earned his MPH from Boston University. Please join us in welcoming Matt!

We recently launched a newly redesigned website. We invite you to navigate and explore the new website at <http://www.epi.alaska.gov/id/iz/default.htm>. The new, improved format and reorganization of information allows users to more easily navigate and find important information. New vaccine information was added to more readily provide access to reliable information that acknowledges the benefits without discounting the risks of vaccination to help individuals make informed immunization decisions.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the value of VacTrAK, Alaska's immunization information system in helping to make informed decisions to improve the health of individuals and the entire community. This is particularly pertinent since all healthcare providers in Alaska are now required to report vaccine administration data to VacTrAK for any vaccine type regardless of whether it is state-supplied or privately purchased vaccine.

- First, we are piloting use of a consumer engagement application called MyIR with several different types of immunization service providers in the Fairbanks area. MyIR allows individuals free, secure access from a computer to current copies of their family's immunization records in the VacTrAK system. Individuals may print vaccination certificates and obtain vaccine forecasts showing which vaccines are due or past due. We hope to expand MyIR access statewide once we have addressed logistical challenges in registering individuals for MyIR.

- Second, the number of patient records and completeness of patient record information in VacTrAK system continues to increase and improve as more immunization service providers utilize the system to update patient demographic and vaccination information. Current features in the system allow users to obtain organization and/or facility-level immunization coverage rate reports which can be used for quality improvement purposes.

In the future, we will feature more statewide data from VacTrAK in the issues of ImmuneNews. For example, the figure below shows the number of Alaskans "active" with two or more shots recorded in VacTrAK and the percent of Alaska children aged 19-35 months fully vaccinated in VacTrAK. 19-35 months is the age by which most children

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Immunization Helpline FAQ's.

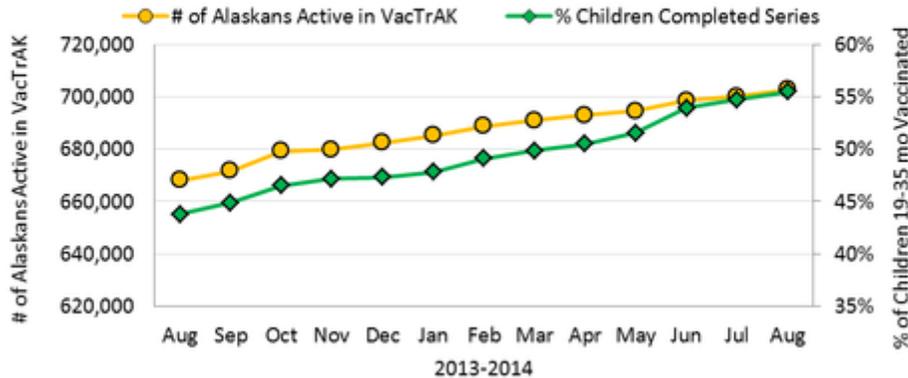
What should we do if a vaccine administration error occurs?

Your practice should put procedures in place to ensure that you choose the right vaccine, dose, route, location, and needle size each time a vaccine is administered.

We recommend that you voluntarily report any vaccine error to the ISMP National Vaccine Error Report Program. The report will be forwarded in confidence to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS), a national vaccine safety surveillance program co-sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). When applicable, the

should be fully vaccinated to protect them from serious infectious diseases.

Figure. Number of Alaskans "Active" with Two or More Shots Recorded in VacTrAK and Percentage of AK Children Aged 19-35 Months Fully Vaccinated in VacTrAK



The Healthy Alaskans 2020's health indicator target to protect Alaskan from vaccine-preventable infectious disease for children aged 19-35 months of age who receive the ACIP recommended vaccination series is 75%. In 2013, Alaska's coverage rate was 65.8%, 42nd out of 50 states, which was statistically adjusted for the Hib vaccine that is used in Alaska (Source: CDC National Immunization Survey*). The median U.S. 2013 combined series vaccination coverage rates was 70.4%. This indicates that Alaska's overall vaccine coverage rate is low compared to other states among children 19-35 months of age.

We look forward to opportunities to foster collaboration to improve vaccination coverage rates for individuals of all ages including children, adolescents, and adults to protect Alaskans from vaccine preventable disease.

I would like to thank healthcare providers, individuals, and parents for your support to fulfill our mission and keep our communities healthy.

Gerri Yett
Manager, Alaska Immunization Program

Note: *The National Immunization Survey (NIS) uses a quarterly, random-digit dialed sample of telephone numbers (both landline and cellular) to reach households with appropriately aged children, followed by a mail survey sent to children's vaccination providers to collect vaccination information.

report will also be shared with product vendors to inform them about pharmaceutical labeling, packaging, and nomenclature issues that may foster errors by their design. **Your name, contact information, and location will NOT be included without your permission.**

For more information go to: <http://verp.ismp.org/>

How can I obtain a copy of my vaccination record in VacTrAK?

At this time, patients can obtain copies of their VacTrAK vaccination record through their healthcare provider in Alaska. All immunization service providers in Alaska are now required to utilize VacTrAK to enter in all vaccine administrations.

Individuals who reside out of state must go thru their healthcare provider to complete an Authorization for Release of Health Information form. The healthcare provider may submit the form to VacTrAK Support. The fax number is 907-562-7802. Available immunization records will be sent to requesting healthcare providers, free of charge as a professional courtesy.

Hot Topic



On October 28, 2014, there was a teleconference held for providers about what to expect in the coming year from the Alaska Vaccine Assessment Program (AVAP). In January 2015, Alaska will facilitate increase access to core vaccines through AVAP, which will be funded by insurers and other payers based on the child and adults lives they cover.

Key information about AVAP for Providers

1. Providers will be automatically enrolled to receive AVAP vaccine when they complete the annual Alaska Vaccine Distribution Program/VacTrAK renewal/enrollment process, starting in January 2015.

- o Providers should start planning for the transition to receive state-distributed vaccine; payers will be requested to reimburse providers under their usual terms for privately-purchased vaccine during the first few months of the program.
- o VacTrAK offers a provider profile report of vaccines that each provider has administered, by eligibility category, to help providers determine how much vaccine to order through AVAP.
- o AVAP-enrolled providers will continue to receive federal Vaccine for Children (VFC) vaccine for children who are Medicaid-eligible, uninsured, American Indian/Alaska Native, or underinsured and seen at a federally qualified health center or a rural health clinic.

2. During the first year (2015), the Alaska Immunization Program will provide:

- o ACIP-recommended childhood vaccines for all children who are not VFC-eligible using funds from the vaccine assessment account and residual state funds from HB 310; and
- o the following adult vaccines: Tdap/Td, Pneumovax, Zostavax (for adults 60–64 years), Menactra (for adults 19–20 years), and HPV (for females 19–26 years and males 19–21 years).
- o Flu vaccine will not be provided through AVAP for the 2014–15 season, but will be provided for the following season.

3. Providers may bill third-party payers who are participating in AVAP for the vaccine administration fee, but not for the cost of the vaccines because these payers have already paid an assessment fee to AVAP.

4. By regulation, providers must report vaccine administration information into VacTrAK (7AAC27.650(a)). This includes:

- o Reporting the funding source for AVAP vaccine as “Public” vaccine, and
- o Using Eligibility code V07 to denote vaccine for insured children/adults received from AVAP.

5. Providers who immunize uninsured adults may opt-in to pay an assessment to receive state-supplied AVAP vaccine for this population at the State’s discounted bulk rate.

Benefits of participating in AVAP

1. Providers can have a single stock of all childhood vaccines and the core adult vaccines. Providers will still need to purchase select adult vaccines (e.g., HepA, Hep B, PCV13, Zostavax).
2. Providers will not have to front the cost of vaccine and risk over-stocking vaccine that they aren’t reimbursed for (or could lose due to problems such as faulty refrigeration).
3. Providers will join in a cost-effective model that improves vaccine access and can help boost coverage rates.

Please contact us with any further questions at: immune@alaska.gov or 907-269-8000.

The 2015 VacTrAK Provider Application renewal process for existing VacTrAK organizations will no longer use the “blank” Provider Application form. Instead, VacTrAK Support staff will be contacting existing VacTrAK organizations starting January 3, 2015 with renewal documents specific to each organization that can be reviewed and returned to VacTrAK with updates. Each existing organization’s VacTrAK Administrator will be contacted by email with the following attachments:

1. Signature page. The VacTrAK Administrator for each organization will review the Confidentiality Agreement, User Agreement, Roles and Responsibilities Document, and then sign on behalf of your organization for 2015.
2. Facility and contact list. A list of all current facilities and contacts within each organization will be provided for review and update as needed.
3. VacTrAK Users list. A list of all current VacTrAK users within each organization will be provided for review and update. The [VacTrAK Request to Modify Users form](#) will be used to request additional user accounts.

Providing existing VacTrAK information to System Administrators for updates should make the process easier, faster, and more accurate. We look forward to working with you in 2015!

Vaccine Management

Thank you for all of your hard work in maintaining proper vaccine storage and handling procedures. Remember to download your LogTag temperature monitoring devices once a week and send the graph to vaccinedepot@alaska.gov. If you have not ever changed the battery on your LogTags, you need to do so very soon to avoid loss of data. A spare battery was provided to you in the original box that contained the LogTag.

The calibration for many LogTags will expire in January. The Immunization Program will be providing organizations with new LogTags before the end of the year. You are required to keep a calibrated back-up temperature monitoring device on hand for emergencies. We recommend that once you set up your new LogTags in your storage units for storing state-supplied vaccine, you recalibrate your current LogTags for use as your back-up monitoring devices. More information will be emailed to you from Vaccine Depot staff before December on receiving new LogTags and recalibrating current LogTags.

The Alaska Immunization Program will again be partnering with the manufacturers MedImmune and McKesson Specialty Health Distribution this influenza season, for the implementation of the FluMist Replacement Program. The FluMist Replacement Program allows for the replacement of unused, expired FluMist doses to help maximize product usage opportunities. More information will be emailed to you from Vaccine Depot staff by December on how to participate. The Vaccine Depot will ship unused, expired FluMist doses to McKesson in January to be replaced with product with a later expiration date.



School & Child Care Compliance Medical Exemptions

Alaska state school and child care laws allow medically exempted children to attend public/private schools, certified preschools, and licensed child care facilities if they have a “statement signed by a doctor of medicine (M.D.), doctor of osteopathy (D.O.), physician

assistant, or advanced nurse practitioner licensed to practice in this state, stating immunizations would, in that individual's professional opinion, be injurious to the health of the child's family or household;..." See link below for more information.

School and child care staff are required to have the Alaska Immunization Requirements Medical Exemption & Disease History Form on file for medically exempted children. Practitioners providing medical exemptions **must** complete this form when exempting children for medical reasons. The use of this form standardizes the process, eliminating the need for parents, school and child care staff, and other practitioners to interpret individually written statements by clearly stating the reason for the allowable exemption as written in the laws.

For school and child care attendance purposes, these exemptions are **permanent** even if a provider considers the exemption temporary.

For copies of school and child care laws and exemption forms, as well as other information regarding school and child care attendance requirements, please see the [State of Alaska Child Care & School Immunization Requirements Packet \(Revised 6/2013\)](#).

AFIX

The 2014 Assessment, Feedback, Incentives, and eXchange (AFIX) process has focused primarily on children (19 through 35 months). In 2015, AFIX will be expanded to include processes for adolescents (13 through 17 years).

One of the most beneficial VacTrAK features that AFIX staff discuss with providers participating in the AFIX process is the use of the system's [Child Coverage Rate](#) Report. This report provides each practice with patient specific immunization information and practice specific immunization coverage levels. This information can be used to guide providers towards identifying practices that may enhance immunization coverage rates or assist to identify areas of need.

By generating patient specific information, one can identify patients who are no longer active in their practice or are due/overdue for immunizations. The [Modifying Patient Status](#) user guide describes how providers can manually inactivate patients that are no longer being served by their practice.

Education & Training Resources

The VacTrAK webpage features several quick reference user guide tools on essential functions and features that allow users to make full use of the immunization information system. One such quick reference user guide to highlight is on Basic Reminder/Recall.

Reminder/recall allows you to notify patients about due or past due vaccinations. [The Community Preventive Service Task Force](#) recommends reminder and recall interventions based on strong evidence of effectiveness in improving vaccination coverage:

- In children and adults
- In all types of medical settings including private practices and public health agency clinics
- For universally recommended vaccinations such as routine childhood vaccinations as well as targeted vaccinations such as influenza or HPV.

The Alaska Immunization Program recommends healthcare providers perform reminder/recall notifications at least monthly using reports either in VacTrAK and/or electronic health record systems to ensure timeliness completion of recommended immunizations to prevent disease. Reminder/recall also provides an important secondary benefit of improved IIS data quality by using responses to the reminder/recall

communications to add or update information in the IIS. Such notifications are effective and can increase immunization coverage rates 5-20 percentage points.

VacTrAK reminder/recall notification outputs include: patient phone lists, postcard and letter print options, mail merge content, auto-dialer content, and email reminder notification.

For more information, visit:

http://www.epi.alaska.gov/id/iz/vactrak/docs/VacTrAK_Reminder_Recall_Basics.pdf

To request additional training on use of the reminder/recall feature in VacTrAK please contact VacTrAK Support at vactrak@alaska.gov or (888) 430-4321 toll free or 907-269-8088.

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