



**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE**

Oxiris Barbot, MD  
*Commissioner*

March 20, 2020

Dear Colleagues:

As a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has issued clinical guidance on addressing well-child and sick visits. Guidance includes prioritizing well visits for newborns, as well as for infants and younger children who require immunizations. See <https://services.aap.org/en/pages/covid-19-clinical-guidance-q-a/> for further information.

If your facility is still conducting well-child visits, please continue to vaccinate children on schedule. We want to emphasize the importance of vaccinating infants born to women with chronic hepatitis B infection and who are hepatitis B surface antigen positive. These infants are at increased risk of acquiring hepatitis B infection and need to receive their second (at 1-2 months of age) and third (at 6 months of age) hepatitis B vaccine doses on time.

For those of you that participate in the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program, be aware that compliance site visits are suspended. We recognize that some sites may be temporarily closed or not conducting well-child visits. Consequently, we are asking enrolled VFC sites to notify us if your site is temporarily closing or not vaccinating. Our staff will work with your VFC Vaccine Coordinator to cancel any existing orders. If your site is closed, **DO NOT** place a VFC vaccine order until after your site re-opens. Facilities that may be closed—for example, School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs)—should determine if they can still monitor their storage unit temperatures remotely or if they need to move their vaccine to parent sites.

Sites remain responsible for VFC vaccine currently in inventory. Ensuring the viability of VFC vaccine should continue via monitoring of storage unit temperatures. Temperature excursions must still be reported.

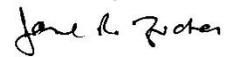
Please see below for recommended storage and handling guidelines during/after temporary provider closings:

- Please refer to your site's emergency plan and follow that protocol in the event of extended closure.
- Upon reopening, review all DDL data and take action on any temperature excursions before administering vaccine.
- When reviewing DDL data it is important to check that complete data are available for all past dates and times.
- Make sure that the DDL can record temperatures for the entire duration of closure. If the DDL ultimately did not have enough capacity to record during the period of closure, or if the unit experienced failures, you will need to consult with the vaccine manufacturer to determine vaccine viability.

VFC staff are still working and will process orders from sites that remain open during this time. They are also available to answer questions and troubleshoot any DDL issues that may arise.

As most staff are working remotely, please email us at [nycimmunize@health.nyc.gov](mailto:nycimmunize@health.nyc.gov) should you have questions or need assistance. You may also call (347) 396-2405, but the response may be delayed. We thank you for your efforts to protect children against vaccine-preventable diseases.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane R. Zucker". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Jane R. Zucker, MD, MSc  
Bureau of Immunization