NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE
Thomas Farley, M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner

March 8, 2013

Dear Colleague:

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has recently approved VariZIG (varicella zoster immune globulin) for post-exposure prophylaxis of varicella (chicken pox) for non-immune persons at high risk for severe disease who lack evidence of immunity to varicella and who are ineligible for varicella vaccine. In these high-risk groups, VariZIG should be given within 96 hours after exposure, to reduce the risk and severity of varicella infections.

VariZIG can be obtained through the sole-authorized U.S. distributor, FFF Enterprises. To place an order, you may contact FFF at 800-843-7477 or www.fffenterprises.com. The expanded access protocol used previously to acquire the product was discontinued now that product is commercially available in the U.S.

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommendations regarding indications for the use of VariZIG remain unchanged. Patients eligible to receive VariZIG include those without evidence of immunity to varicella who have been exposed to varicella or herpes zoster, are ineligible for varicella vaccine and are at high risk for severe varicella disease and complications; these include:

- Immunocompromised patients.
- Neonates whose mothers have signs and symptoms of varicella around the time of delivery (i.e., 5 days before to 2 days after).
- Premature infants born at ≥28 weeks of gestation who are exposed during the neonatal period and whose mothers do not have evidence of immunity.
- Premature infants born at <28 weeks of gestation or who weigh ≤1,000 g at birth and were exposed during the neonatal period, regardless of their mothers' evidence of immunity status.
- Pregnant women.

Additional information can be found at the following websites:

- Varicella prevention: www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5604a1.htm
- VariZIG prescribing: http://cangenemedicalservices.com/downloads/VARIZIG_PI.pdf
- VariZIG FDA approval: www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm333233.htm

Sincerely,

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