VACCINE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

The development and utilization of vaccines has been highly accelerated during the past two decades. Consequently, vaccine costs have risen at increasingly progressive rates. Vaccines constitute a large portion of a practice's costs and need to be managed as efficiently as possible to avoid unnecessary loss. To ensure purity, potency, and unnecessary loss of vaccine, it is very important to follow these guidelines:

1. Follow the storage and handling instructions contained in package inserts.
    - Stack vaccine with air space between stacks to allow cold air to circulate around the vaccine.
    - **DO NOT** store DTaP, DT, TD, e-IPV, or influenza vaccine next to refrigerator walls where coils are located, as it could freeze. The coils are extremely cold and could result in the vaccine being ruined.
    - **NEVER STORE VACCINE IN THE REFRIGERATOR DOOR.** Opening and shutting refrigerator doors causes unnecessary temperature changes and could cause vaccine failure.

2. Assign responsibility for vaccine management to one individual and one backup in each facility. This reduces the number of persons handling the vaccine and provides greater safeguards against mishandling. Providers who order varicella and MMRV should ensure that staff is trained in the special handing and administration requirements of this vaccine.

3. Develop and conduct training for all office staff. Vaccine is delicate and costly. Inappropriate handling or usage could result in vaccine that does not provide protection.

4. Monitor and maintain records of temperature readings for freezers and refrigerators.
    - A remote alarm system is recommended in case of power failures.
    - Check and log temperatures **twice** a day (at a minimum once a day).
    - Use of a recording thermometer is strongly recommended. This is especially important if no readings are taken on weekends.

5. Maintain inventory control records to monitor lot numbers and expiration dates. "First in" is usually "first out"; however, expiration dates should be checked on all new shipments, as it is possible to receive vaccine that will expire earlier than other vaccine in stock.

6. Do not use expired vaccine and monitor vaccines to avoid wastage.

7. Conduct a hard count of inventory once a month, preferably on the last working day of each month.

8. Never store more vaccine than necessary in facilities with questionable equipment or monitoring capabilities. Avoid placing vaccine at unnecessary risk of power failure.

9. When establishing your vaccine needs, consider:
    - Vaccine usage patterns
    - Time needed for re-supply
    - Storage capabilities
    - Vaccine accountability and wastage

10. Other suggestions:
    - **INSTALL PLUG GUARDS/PROTECTORS**. This helps prevent power loss from accidental unplugging or power surges.
    - **PROTECT AND MARK CIRCUIT BREAKER SWITCHES**. This prevents accidental shutting down of power by maintenance/repair crews.
    - **LOCK STORAGE FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT**. This prevents unauthorized removal of vaccine and use of storage for other purposes.
    - **STORE AND FREEZE ICE PACKS IN THE FREEZER**. This helps maintain the cold chain in the event of a power loss.
    - **STORE BOTTLES OF WATER ON REFRIGERATOR SHELVES NEXT TO WALLS**. This helps maintain the cold chain and prevents the freezing of vaccine by the coils in the walls of the refrigerator.
    - **DO NOT STORE FOOD OR DRINKS WITH VACCINE**. This eliminates unnecessary opening of the doors, which results in temperature fluctuations.
    - **DILUENT SHOULD BE STORED OUTSIDE THE REFRIGERATOR**. It takes up space and does not need to be refrigerated; however, some practices that do not carry large amounts of vaccine may choose to place the diluent in the door of the refrigerator to put less strain on the refrigerator's cooling system.

For further assistance regarding vaccine management issues, please contact your Regional Immunization Representative or the VFC Customer Service Representatives at 1-800-219-3224.