

Section One: General Information

I. Introduction

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), Immunization Unit, has prepared the Texas Vaccines for Children Program (TVFC) Operations Manual. Consultation on the policies in this manual are conducted routinely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), DSHS, and many other organizations.

The purpose of the Operations Manual is to consolidate TVFC policies and information into one source document for health service regions (HSR) and local health departments (LHD). The contents are intended only for those entities and not for other providers enrolled in the TVFC. The Operations Manual will be updated and distributed on an annual basis. Throughout the year, the Immunization Branch and the TVFC will continue to educate providers on new policies via official memorandums. Each memorandum should be placed in the back of the Operations Manual. At the time of the annual update, all policy memorandums for the previous year will be incorporated as policy within the manual.

After reviewing this manual, partners are asked to complete the survey in the back. Your input is important so that future versions of the TVFC Operations Manual can be improved.

II. Public Health Law Establishing the VFC Program

The federal Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program is authorized by the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (OBRA), section 1928 of the Social Security Act.

Funding from the federal VFC is supplemented with 317 and state General Revenue funds to support TVFC and all immunization activities across Texas.

The TVFC enables over 5 million Texas children to have access to affordable immunizations. This is accomplished through a network of support within DSHS and with support from private and public entities, such as the LHDs and private physicians.

III. Vision and Mission of the Immunization Unit

Vision

A Texas free of vaccine-preventable diseases.

Mission

To provide leadership to increase vaccine coverage levels and reduce the burden of vaccine-preventable diseases for all Texas infants, children, adolescents, and adults.

IV. Goals of the DSHS Immunization Unit

- Raise and sustain vaccine coverage levels for infants and children;
- Improve adolescent vaccine coverage levels;
- Improve adult vaccine coverage levels;
- Prevent and reduce cases of vaccine preventable diseases;
- Maintain and improve public health preparedness; and
- Promote and practice the safe handling of vaccines and ensure the accountability of all program components.

V. Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy Rule

OVERVIEW:

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), Public Law 104-191, was enacted on August 21, 1996. Sections 261 – 264 of HIPAA require the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to publicize standards for the electronic exchange, privacy and security of health information. The resulting legislation, the Privacy Rule, was finalized and published in August 2002.

One major purpose of the Privacy Rule is to define and limit the circumstance in which an individual's Protected Health Information (PHI) can be used or disclosed to covered entities. A covered entity may not use or disclose PHI, except either: (1) as the Privacy Rule permits or requires; or (2) as the individual who is the subject of the information (or the individual's personal representative) authorizes in writing.

IMPACT ON PUBLIC HEALTH:

45 CFR § 164.512 (b) of the Privacy Rule advises that a covered entity may disclose, without individual authorization, PHI to a public health authority* that is legally authorized to collect or receive the information, a covered entity for the purposes of preventing or controlling disease, injury, or disability including but not limited to

- Reporting of disease, injury, and vital events (e.g., birth or death); and
- Conducting public health surveillance, investigations, and interventions

*Or to an entity working under a grant of authority from a public health authority, or when directed by a public health authority.

VI. TVFC Regional Contacts

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