Dear Texas Vaccines for Children Providers,

Effective July 1, 2025, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) implemented a change to the *underinsured* eligibility definition for the Texas Vaccines for Children (TVFC) program.

The new *underinsured* definition is as follows:

A child who has commercial (private) health insurance, but the insurance policy:

- does not cover any Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)-recommended vaccines,
- covers only selected ACIP-recommended vaccines, or
    - The child is *underinsured* for the vaccines not covered.
- does not provide first-dollar coverage for ACIP-recommended vaccines.
    - First-dollar coverage means insurance companies pay from the first dollar billed, with no cost-sharing (i.e., no copays or deductibles). Major medical plans that qualify under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) have first-dollar coverage for preventive care visits. Patients will not pay out-of-pocket for a standard preventive care visit, even if their deductible hasn't been met for the year.

Previously, the 2025 Provider Operations Manual defined *underinsured* as:

- A child who has commercial (private) health insurance, but coverage does not include any vaccines,
- A child whose insurance covers only selected vaccines (TVFC-eligible for non-covered vaccines only),
- A child who has health insurance covering all vaccines, but the plan has a fixed dollar limit or cap on the amount that it will cover for vaccines (TVFC-eligible once the fixed dollar amount or cap is reached)

NOTE: As required by the ACA, insurance plans purchased through the Health Insurance Marketplace are required to cover ACIP-recommended vaccines (including seasonal flu vaccine) for children of all ages without charging a deductible, copayment, or billing coinsurance.

TVFC Patient Eligibility:

Screening all children at every immunization encounter and documenting eligibility screening at every visit is the only way to ensure that TVFC program vaccine is used only for TVFC-eligible children. TVFC providers may reference the TVFC Eligibility Guide, Stock No. 11-16915, for details on who is eligible to receive TVFC vaccines.

- Providers must use the Patient Eligibility Screening Record (Stock no. C-10) to document all vaccinations.
- Providers must verify all insurance plans for patients stating they are *underinsured*.
- Providers must not turn a patient away due to inability to pay the vaccine administration fee of $13.75.
- Providers must keep all records on file for at least five (5) years.

If the provider cannot verify vaccination coverage, for the purposes of the TVFC program, the child is considered insured and not eligible to receive VFC vaccines at that immunization encounter.

Documentation Requirements:

- Date of screening
- Patient name
- Parent/guardian name
- Date of birth
- Clinic name
- Eligibility status (e.g., "*underinsured*")

The Texas DSHS Immunization Program will reflect this policy change with the publication of the 2026 TVFC Provider Operations Manuals. For questions, contact your Responsible Entity (RE).

Thank you for your partnership with the TVFC program.

Texas Department of State Health Services

Immunization Program