

Trouble viewing?, [view it in your browser](#).  
If you don't want to receive emails from us, you can [unsubscribe](#).



Idaho Medical Association

May 14, 2009

Memo: 048.09

To: Idaho Physicians

From: Suzan Belzer, IMA Reimbursement Program Director

Subject: Update on Idaho Immunization Program

Since 1994, Idaho has been a “universal” vaccine purchase state with childhood vaccines provided to all children free of charge. In the past, this program has been supported by yearly state appropriations. Unfortunately, the funding for this program was cut as of July 1, 2009.

Due to considerable interest in maintaining a universal childhood vaccine program in Idaho despite the loss of state appropriations and changes to federal Vaccines for Children (VFC) eligibility, a task force was formed to consider options to ensure that Idaho’s children have access to vaccines so that they are fully immunized.

This group consists of Department of Health and Welfare (DHW) representatives; BrightPath Network Executive Director Janice Fulkerson and Medical Director Geoffrey Swanson, MD; Blue Cross and Regence Blue Shield Medical Directors, Doug Dammrose, MD and Richard Rainey, MD; medical directors and executive staff from other insurance companies including Primary Health and Pacific Source; as well as IMA staff. The task force is exploring ways to collaborate to maintain universal coverage for vaccines. The participants recognize the importance of working together to ensure this transition results in a plan that minimizes the disruption to those

who provide important medical care services, including immunizations, in Idaho.

The task force determined that a two-pronged approach will be needed to accomplish this goal. First and most urgently, an interim system that would create a pool of money to allow the DHW as a cooperative to purchase vaccines at discounted prices. In addition, a mechanism would be developed for insurers to reimburse the state for vaccines provided to their members. This may require some slight modifications in how immunizations are billed to insurers once the vaccines are purchased under the new cooperative. This would allow the state to continue to provide physicians with vaccines for children who are insured along with those who continue to meet VFC criteria (being enrolled in Medicaid, being an Alaska Native or Native American, being uninsured, or having coverage that does not include vaccines).

While every effort will be made to have this system in place as soon as possible, **it is important to note that it is highly probable that this will not happen as of July 1**, resulting in a gap in coverage for insured children. The IMA strongly recommends that physicians make contingency plans for a period of time beginning July 1 and currently estimated to be approximately a month to six weeks. Watch for updates from the IMA and the Department of Health and Welfare on vaccine availability along with procedures of claim submission and billing.

The second part of the approach, after the interim system is in place, is for the Department of Health and Welfare to develop and present to the Legislature a long-term plan to maintain the state-purchased vaccine program.

If you have questions, please contact Suzan Belzer at 208-344-7888 or via email at [sbelzer@idmed.org](mailto:sbelzer@idmed.org).

Don't wish to receive these emails? [Unsubscribe](#) here.

IMA | P.O. Box 2668 - 305 West Jefferson | Boise | ID | 83701 | 208-344-7888