

August 30, 2024

Important Updates on Immunization Services and Requirements

Dear Providers,

As a reminder, all Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)-recommended vaccines are covered for Medi-Cal and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) patients without cost sharing.

The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) has recently updated requirements related to coverage of vaccines:

- **VFC Program Pharmacist Administered Vaccines:** As of August 1, 2024, retroactive to January 1, 2024, DHCS will reimburse pharmacy providers for the professional services associated with the administration of the vaccines and the professional dispensing fee when administered as part of the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program AND when billed as a pharmacy benefit to Medi-Cal Rx. This reimbursement for pharmacy administration for VFC-funded vaccines is new. Pharmacists also have the option of submitting a medical claim for pharmacist services related to initiating and administering a vaccine. If this route is taken, the claim should be submitted to the member's managed care plan (Health Plan of San Mateo) instead of through Medi-Cal Rx.
- **Reporting Requirements:** All vaccine administrations must be reported to the appropriate immunization registry within 14 days. This is a crucial requirement to ensure compliance with both state and federal laws.
- **Implementation and Compliance:** Providers must document immunization needs as part of all regular health visits, including illness, care management, initial health appointments, pharmacy services, prenatal and postpartum care, and other relevant encounters.

To ensure a smooth transition to these updated requirements, we urge all providers to integrate the following actions into their practices:

1. Begin billing for the administration of VFC-funded vaccines as a pharmacy benefit through Medi-Cal Rx, and explore the option of medical claims for services, if applicable.

2. Implement a system for reporting all vaccine administrations to the appropriate immunization registry within the mandated 14-day period.
3. Document immunization needs during all relevant patient interactions, including routine health visits and specialty care.

To learn more about billing for immunizations please review the APL 24-008:

<https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/formsandpubs/Documents/MMCDAPLsandPolicyLetters/APL%202024/APL24-008.pdf>

For any questions or further clarification on these updates, please contact HPSM Provider Services at PSInquiries@hpsm.org.

Thank you for your attention to this matter,

The Health Plan of San Mateo