



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES

DAVID L. LAKEY, M.D.
COMMISSIONER

P.O. Box 149347
Austin, Texas 78714-9347
1-888-963-7111
TTY: 1-800-735-2989
www.dshs.state.tx.us

March 1, 2012

RE: Changes to DSHS TVFC vaccine policy

Dear Education Service Center staff, school nurse and school administrator:

As a partner in the statewide immunization system, the Department of State Health Services is sending this communication regarding program policy changes that affect our state's children. Recent fiscal reductions to both the state and federal budgets and increased federal requirements ensuring accountability for the federal Vaccines for Children Program have necessitated changes in policy to the Texas Vaccines for Children (TVFC) Program. These changes will result in where some children will access vaccination services, but will not affect any child's overall access to vaccines.

Effective January 1, 2012, children who have private, commercial insurance which covers vaccines are no longer eligible for the TVFC program. Under prior policy, no child was denied a vaccine in public health department clinics. Under the new policy which is already implemented, privately insured children will need to be referred to their physician and not to a public health department clinic.

The Department is diligently working to communicate with school administrators, school nurses, the Education Service Center and parents to ensure that all children have time to get their vaccines before school starts in August. School nurses and health personnel will need to stress to parents the importance of staying current with immunizations. It is particularly important to communicate the recent TVFC program policy change to parents of students who may be affected so they have ample time to secure immunization services at a provider within their insurance network.

School requirements for attendance are not changing and students must still obtain the necessary minimum immunizations for attendance prior to enrolling and attending class. This issue will become even more crucial during back-to-school when parents are seeking immunizations for new students or those entering 7th grade and school staff should begin working with parents now to obtain the vaccines needed for next year.

If you need additional information or have any questions regarding the changes to the program please contact the Immunization Branch at 800-252-9152.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jack C. Sims".

Jack C. Sims, Manager
Immunization Branch