

Date: September 11, 2012

To: Local Health Departments
Administrators
Nursing Supervisors
Immunization Coordinators
Health Officers
Public Vaccines for Children Clinics

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From: Lorraine Duncan, Immunization Program Manager

Re: Important Federal Policy Change for 317-funded Vaccine

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently notified states of an upcoming change in federally purchased 317 vaccine policy scheduled to begin October 1, 2012. Oregon Immunization Program (OIP) has negotiated a transition timeline. Beginning March 1, 2013:

- Oregon’s local health departments and other public clinics can’t use federally funded Section 317 vaccine for insured people even if the insurance includes an unaffordable deductible or co-pay, and
- OIP will no longer give credits when clinics are paid less than billed.

Oregon Immunization Program (OIP) has been working with the CDC to ease this policy transition for LHDs and other public clinics, especially while preparing for School Exclusion Day (Feb. 13, 2013). As a result of our negotiations, OIP will use non-federal funds to support continued access for clients with unaffordable copays and/or deductibles, and clients for whom the clinic receives less than 100% reimbursement from the client’s health plan.

Public clinics and LHDs may continue, only until March 1, 2013, using the “O” vaccine eligibility code when administering vaccine(s) to this group of clients. OIP encourages LHDs and public clinics to:

- begin screening clients before determining their eligibility status in preparation for the March 1, 2013 policy change.
- use the transition time to consider other ways to cover the cost of immunizing this group of clients.

LHDs and public clinics will also need to maintain information about each client in this category; further guidance will be sent in the next ten days.

OIP will host a conference call on Monday, Sept. 17, 2012 from 12:00 to 1:00 pm to answer questions and concerns about this policy change. OHA Division of Public Health leadership will reach out to those insurance providers whose policies make the contracting and billing process too complicated and challenging for you.

The Section 317 Immunization Program has contributed to one of the most successful public health interventions in history. It's crucial that we provide good stewardship of these funds by ensuring that they're available to those who need them most. OIP has prepared a toolkit with talking points, a 317 Q&A and a client message template as well as details for the informational conference call. Please contact OIP if you need any additional assistance in implementing this new policy.

317 Policy Conference Call
Monday, September 17, 2012
12:00 – 1:00 pm
877-807-5706
Participant code: 924639

Talking Points for local health departments and public clinics:

- Due to a new federal policy, beginning March 1, 2013:
 - Local health departments and other public clinics can no longer use federally funded Section 317 vaccine for insured people whose insurance includes an unaffordable deductible or co-pay, and
 - OIP will no longer give credits when LHDs and other public clinics are reimbursed less than billed.
- Fully insured people are those whose insurance covers the cost of vaccine, even if the insurance has an unaffordable deductible or co-pay.
- Public clinics and LHDs can continue to use billable vaccine, and bill insurance companies or the individual for the immunizations that they administer. After March 1, 2013, OIP can no longer cover the cost of unaffordable co-pays or deductibles, and can no longer give clinics credit when health plans reimburse at less than 100 percent of vaccine costs billed.
- OIP encourages clients/parents to find out the specifics of their health plan's coverage prior to seeking immunization services.
- Parents should check to make sure that their children have all their school-required immunizations well before School Exclusion Day, Feb 13, 2013.

Sample Message for LHDs and Public Clinic clients:

Please be aware that beginning March 1, 2013, our office can no longer cover the cost of co-pays or deductibles for adults and children whose health plan covers the cost of vaccine. The health department will bill insurance providers, and any copay or deductible is the responsibility of the client. Parents and adult clients should become familiar with the specifics of their health plan's immunization coverage before bringing their children to our clinic for their vaccinations.

Public clinics across Oregon will continue to vaccinate uninsured children and adults and those eligible for the Vaccines for Children program. Parents should make sure that their children's school-required vaccines are up-to-date well before School Exclusion Day, Feb. 20, 2013.