



Medi-Cal Rx

# Vaccines For Children Program Policy and Billing Guidance for Pharmacy Providers

August 30, 2024

## Background

The purpose of this alert is to provide pharmacy providers with guidance regarding the billing of immunization services under the Vaccines For Children (VFC) program.

Vaccines are available to Medi-Cal members 18 years of age and younger free of charge through the VFC program. Pharmacies who are Medi-Cal providers and wish to administer VFC-funded vaccines to VFC-eligible Medi-Cal members must enroll in the VFC program. The vaccines must be administered in accordance with the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) guidelines published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

## What Pharmacy Providers Need to Know

Effective August 30, 2024, Medi-Cal will reimburse for the professional services associated with the administration of the vaccine, the vaccine initiation fee (consultation and assessment) as applicable, and the professional dispensing fee. The cost of the vaccine will not be reimbursed since the vaccines are free.

The ordering pharmacist must be enrolled in Medi-Cal as an Ordering, Referring, and Prescribing (ORP) provider for claim reimbursement. Refer to the following resources for additional information about ORP enrollment:

- [Ordering/Referring/Prescribing Only Enrollment Information](#) page
- [Ordering, Referring, Prescribing \(ORP\) Enrollment](#)

Any concerns regarding delay in reimbursement should not cause providers to decline administering vaccines to members. Providers with questions should contact Medi-Cal Rx at 1-800-977-2273. Agents are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days per year. For more information on services covered by Medi-Cal Rx, providers should refer to the [Medi-Cal Rx Web Portal](#).

## Claims and Reimbursement

Since VFC vaccines are provided free of charge, pharmacy providers must not bill Medi-Cal for the cost of the vaccines. Claims for reimbursement of the professional services immunization administration fee can be submitted either through Medi-Cal Rx for both fee-for-service and managed care plan (MCP) members on a pharmacy claim based on NCPDP standards, or as a medical claim to the MCP for MCP members and to DHCS/California Medicaid Management

Information System (CA-MMIS) for fee-for-service members using vaccine CPT codes as outlined below. Refer to the [Pharmacist Services](#) section in the [DHCS Provider Manual](#) for more information about billing Pharmacist Services under fee-for-service.

Claims for reimbursement of the vaccine initiation fee (consultation and assessment) must be submitted as a medical claim under Pharmacist Services. Pharmacist Services claims for fee-for-service members must be submitted to DHCS (CA-MMIS) as outlined in the following *Medical Claims Submission to DHCS (CA-MMIS) for Immunization and Vaccine Initiation (Consultation/Assessment) for Fee-for-Service Members* section. Claims for MCP members must be billed to the individual MCP as instructed by the MCP.

## VFC-Funded COVID-19 Vaccines

For COVID-19 vaccines, VFC-enrolled pharmacy providers will not be reimbursed for the cost of the vaccine obtained through the VFC program for members 18 years of age and younger. An administration fee will be reimbursed at \$40.

## Retroactive Processing of Eligible Claims

The effective date of this policy is for dates of service (DOS) on or after January 1, 2023.

DHCS will reprocess all eligible claims from DOS on or after January 1, 2023. All vaccine costs that were erroneously reimbursed for free vaccines will be recouped through a DHCS-initiated mass adjustment process.

## Important Billing Instructions

Pharmacy providers must adhere to the following billing instructions for appropriate reimbursement:

- DHCS will reimburse Medi-Cal and VFC-enrolled pharmacy providers for the following three different services when VFC-funded vaccines are administered in accordance with ACIP recommendations:
  - Professional services associated with the administration of the vaccines.
    - This will be paid for both MCP and fee-for-service members under Medi-Cal Rx using NCPDP standards as outlined in the next section.
    - Alternatively, this may be submitted as a medical benefit as outlined in the next section.
  - Vaccine initiation fee (consultation and assessment of need for vaccination).
    - This will be paid as a medical claim as outlined in the next section.
  - The professional dispensing fee (excluding COVID-19 vaccines).
- The cost of the vaccine will not be reimbursed since the vaccines are free. Refer to the next section for instructions.

## NCPDP Billing Standard for Claims Submission to Medi-Cal Rx

- For reimbursement of the professional services immunization administration fee under Medi-Cal Rx, using the NCPDP standard for both fee-for-service and MCP members:
  - Providers must identify on the claim that the pharmacy is administering the vaccine.
  - Providers must populate the incentive fee: Incentive Amount Submitted (438-E3) filed with a dollar amount and populating the following fields as outlined below:
    - Reason for Service Code (NCPDP field 439-E4): PH = Preventive Health Care
    - Professional Service Code (NCPDP field 440-E5): MA = Medication Administration
    - Result of Service Code (NCPDP field 441-E6): 3N = Medication Administration
  - DHCS will reimburse the lesser of the billed amount or **\$7.65** for the professional services associated with the vaccine administration.

## Medical Claims Submission to DHCS (CA-MMIS) for Immunization and Vaccine Initiation (Consultation/Assessment) for Fee-for-Service Members

- For reimbursement of the VFC professional services immunization administration fee, pharmacy providers should list each administered vaccine CPT code with a modifier code of state-supplied vaccine (SL). Billing details including vaccine CPT codes can be found in the [Vaccines For Children \(VFC\) Program](#) section of the [DHCS Provider Manual](#).
  - Providers must not bill the immunization administration fee through both Medi-Cal Rx and CA-MMIS.
- Claims for the consultation and assessment must be billed to DHCS (CA-MMIS) on a medical claim under Pharmacist Services using CPT codes 99202 (new patient) or 99212 (existing patient). Reimbursement is based on the current methodology found in the [Pharmacist Services](#) section in the DHCS Provider Manual.
  - All claims submitted to DHCS (CA-MMIS) must be submitted on a *CMS-1500* medical claim form.

## Medical Claims Submission for MCP members

Pharmacy providers must submit medical claims for MCP members under Pharmacists Services to applicable MCPs.

## Resources

- [Medi-Cal Reimbursement of Vaccines For Children \(VFC\)-Enrolled Pharmacy Providers and for VFC and Non-VFC Vaccines – Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#)
- [Pharmacist Services](#) section in the [DHCS Provider Manual](#)
- [About the Vaccines for Children \(VFC\) Program](#)
- [Immunization Schedules for Healthcare Providers](#)

- [Vaccines Licensed for Use in the United States](#)
- [Ordering/Referring/Prescribing Only Enrollment Information](#)
- [Ordering, Referring, Prescribing \(ORP\) Enrollment](#)
- [Provider Application and Validation for Enrollment](#)

## Contact Information

You can call the Medi-Cal Rx Customer Service Center (CSC) at 1-800-977-2273, which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days per year.

For other questions, email Medi-Cal Rx Education & Outreach at [MediCalRxEducationOutreach@primetherapeutics.com](mailto:MediCalRxEducationOutreach@primetherapeutics.com).