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Gateway reference: 14707

To: SHA Immunisation Leads
PCT Immunisation Co-ordinators

8 September 2010

Dear Colleague

Efficient Use of Vaccines

You will be aware from Vaccine Update that the Department has recently been undertaking work, in conjunction with colleagues in the NHS, to encourage the efficient use of vaccines. The purpose of this letter is to update you on the work that has already taken place, and to advise you of future developments.

The programme referred to as VESPA (Vaccine Efficiency Savings Programme Audit) has two main deliverables:

- The provision of clear national guidance to NHS staff on the correct ordering, storing and handling of vaccines; and
- The provision of more comprehensive information at PCT and GP Practice level on the amount of vaccines needed to immunise their populations, the actual amounts of vaccine ordered, and the value of vaccines ordered.

There will be a number of important benefits of this work:

- Patient safety will be improved by reducing the risk of incorrectly stored vaccine being given;
- The need for costly call back exercises will be avoided because cases of incorrectly stored or out of date vaccine being used should be minimised; and
- Scope for vaccine wastage will be reduced.

This work will help the service to apply existing guidance on the safe and efficient use of vaccines, such as that issued by the National Patient Safety Agency on vaccine cold storage: www.nrls.npsa.nhs.uk/resources/type/alerts/?entryid45=66111

Further details on the main elements of the programme are set out below.

Changes to ImmForm

Changes to the vaccine ordering pages of ImmForm have recently been made. The purpose of these changes is to highlight the value of the vaccine ordered and thus encourage staff to treat it as a valuable commodity. The changes include:

- The value of each order is now highlighted within order confirmation and dispatch emails.

- The usual delivery day of week is shown on the order creation page. This will further help users to manage their orders.
- When a user confirms an order, the confirmation box that pops up now includes the order value, while also making clear that payment is not required.

These enhancements to ImmForm make the case for GP Practices to register and submit orders via this website even more compelling. Currently about two-thirds of GP Practices are registered. However not all registered practices have started using the website yet and we recommend they start to do so as soon as possible. About a third of GP Practices which are registered are actively using ImmForm to order their vaccines. Those, which are not, should be encouraged to do so by visiting www.vaccinesupply.dh.gov.uk/registration. They will need their:

- NHS code (e.g. practice code)
- Movianto UK account number(s)
- name, email and phone details (of the key contact responsible for placing orders)

PCTs will be able to see a new report on ImmForm listing the ImmForm registration status of their GP Practices. This report is expected to be released on ImmForm by Monday 13th September.

Protocol for Ordering, Storing and Handling Vaccines

A national protocol has been developed with considerable input from SHA, PCT and Practice staff with extensive current practical experience of vaccination. The protocol is a simple and concise document that draws on existing guidance and best practice and reflects procedures that should already be in place.

We plan to distribute the protocol to PCTs at the beginning of October with a request to encourage its adoption, including within GP practices, locally. The Protocol will also be available to view on ImmForm (www.immform.dh.gov.uk) and the DH website (www.dh.gov.uk/en/PublicHealth/Immunisation/index.htm).

Vaccine Numbers Needed (VNN)

The remaining element of the programme relates to the provision of information to compare the amount of vaccine ordered with the notional amount PCTs need to immunise practice populations. The first step will be to estimate the numbers of vaccine doses needed at PCT and GP Practice level. This will be based on an estimate of the number of children who will be in the appropriate age range in the GP registered population. The VNN will be an estimate of the amount of vaccine needed to fully immunise 100% of that population.

- In early October PCTs will be advised of indicative VNNs for Pediacel for the PCT as a whole and its GP Practices. PCTs will be able to submit revised VNNs if they believe the indicative amounts are inaccurate.
- Immunisation Branch is developing a monitoring tool that will enable PCTs and practices to compare the amount of vaccine ordered against the VNN over time. ImmForm users will be able to see how their order levels compare to the VNN forecast and will be given guidance on action to take if vaccine ordered is likely to exceed VNN.

- The initial VNN period will run from 1 October 2010 to 31 March 2011 for Pediacel. Thereafter the VNN periods will be annual, running from 1 April to 31 March each year.
- Eventually the VNNs, once found to be robust, will act as a yearly capped amount for GP Practices, with those needing more than their VNN having to request any additional vaccine through their PCT immunisation coordinator. Initially, however, the VNN will NOT act as a cap on ordering. This will enable staff to familiarise themselves with the concept, and allow the supporting processes to bed in.
- VNNs for other vaccines such as Prevenar and Menitorix will be issued, once we are confident that the Pediacel VNN approach is operating correctly.

Further detailed guidance will be issued when the indicative VNNs for Pediacel are sent to PCTs in October.

Many thanks again for your support. If you have any queries about the contents of this letter please contact Geoff Dent (geoff.dent@dh.gsi.gov.uk 020 7972 1350).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joanne Yarwood". The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

Jo Yarwood
Acting Head of Immunisation Branch