

# Vermont Immunization Bulletin

December 2019

## Staffing Changes at the Immunization Program

### Good-bye, Katie!

Katie Martinez, Vaccine Distribution Manager, announced her resignation this month:

"It's with very mixed feelings that I share that I've been offered a wonderful new professional opportunity and will be leaving the Immunization Program on January 3. I will always treasure the relationships I have built here with both my public health colleagues and all of you in our dedicated provider offices around the state. The body of work we've accomplished is truly gratifying. Thank you for all that you do to protect Vermonters."



While we recruit for Katie's position, please direct vaccine ordering and inventory management questions to the Immunization Program inbox, [AHS.VDHImmunizationprogram@vermont.gov](mailto:AHS.VDHImmunizationprogram@vermont.gov)

### Farewell, Wanda!

Wanda Cosman BSN, RN, the Immunization Program Quality Improvement Coordinator will retire on Friday, December 20. She would like to share that "it has been an honor to work with medical providers across the state of Vermont."

## Save the date for the 2020 Vermont Immunization and Infectious Disease Conference!

Mark your calendar for the 2020 Vermont Immunization and Infectious Disease Conference on April 7 at the Hilton Burlington on Lake Champlain. This conference is ideal for primary care providers, nurses, school nurses and public health professionals and students. Continuing education credits will be available. Registration details are coming soon – stay tuned!

A blue and white graphic poster for the 2020 Vermont Immunization and Infectious Disease Conference. The text reads: "SAVE THE DATE 2020 IMMUNIZATION & INFECTIOUS DISEASE CONFERENCE VERMONT". It includes the date "April 7, 2020 Hilton Burlington Burlington, Vermont" and a description: "Join us on the shores of Lake Champlain to learn about the latest in infectious disease and immunizations. This conference is ideal for primary care providers, nurses, school nurses and public health professionals and students." It also states "Breakfast and lunch provided. Registration details coming soon!" and provides the website "www.healthvermont.gov/IZIDconference". The Vermont Department of Health logo is at the bottom right.

SAVE THE DATE

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Hilton Burlington  
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VERMONT  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

## Changes in VFC billing practices

The CDC has changed the VFC billing practices to support increased access to vaccines. Effective January 1, 2020, providers who choose to bill for the vaccine administration fee of a non-Medicaid, VFC-eligible child after the date of service may only issue a one bill to the parent/guardian within 90 days of vaccine administration. This policy does not apply to vaccine administration fees billed to Medicaid for children who meet the Medicaid eligibility criteria for the VFC program. Unpaid administration fees may not be sent to collection agencies. The provider may not refuse to vaccinate an eligible child whose parents have unpaid vaccine administration fees.

If you have questions, please contact [ahs.vdhimmunizationprogram@vermont.gov](mailto:ahs.vdhimmunizationprogram@vermont.gov).

## District Office Immunization Policy Reminder

In order to best utilize public health resources, since July 1, 2019 Health Department District Offices have restricted access to free vaccination services to uninsured persons and a small number of patients who receive care from a practice ineligible for enrollment in the Vermont Vaccine Program. This change is necessary to support efforts by District Health Offices to focus initiatives on prevention of disease outbreaks. It also will support Vermont's strong medical home model, thereby avoiding fragmentation of care.

Insured students that have been allowed to enroll in a school without receiving all required vaccines should be referred to their primary care provider as soon as possible. Continue to refer all students lacking insurance to the Local District Office for immunization.

It is the schools' responsibility to ensure that international students are made aware of the immunization requirements and advise that they should be vaccinated prior to arrival. While provisional enrollment is allowed under the law, the Immunization Program strongly advises that international students studying in Vermont arrive with documentation of all required vaccines. Such documentation will reduce the need for record searches, for acquiring vaccines upon arrival in Vermont, and for possible outbreaks of vaccine preventable diseases.

Read the policy [here](#).

## Schedules and Recommendations

### Five things to know about rotavirus vaccines

Rotavirus vaccination rates in the U.S. are lower than other childhood vaccines. You can play a critical role in making strong recommendations to parents for rotavirus vaccination and ensuring that eligible infants get vaccinated on schedule. Learn more in this [Medscape article](#).

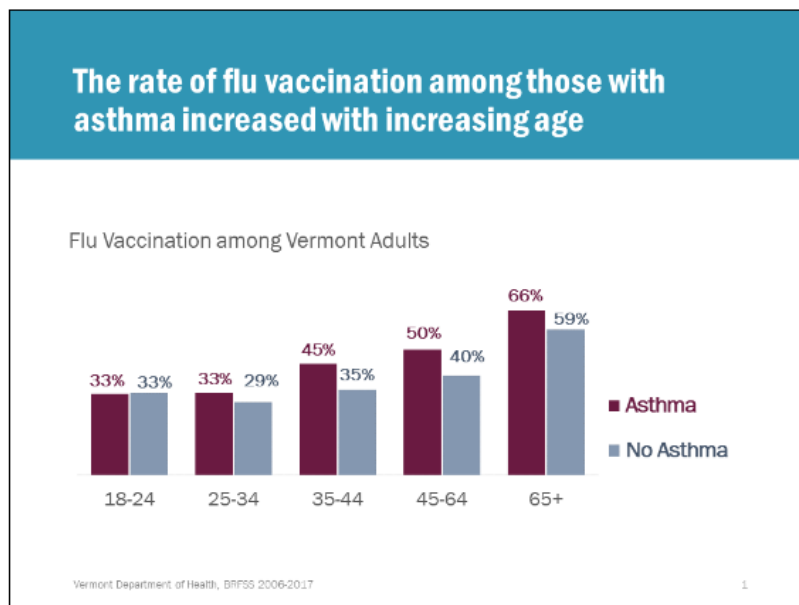
### Flu vaccine is important for Vermonters with asthma

Flu infection can be very serious for people with asthma, even if their asthma is mild or their symptoms are well-controlled by medication. If a person has asthma, defending against the flu is especially important. Influenza can:

- trigger asthma attacks and worsen asthma symptoms,
- lead to pneumonia and other acute respiratory diseases, particularly among people with asthma.

Over 67,000 Vermonters currently have asthma. In 2017, 45% of Vermont adults with asthma received the flu shot. Vaccination rates were similar for those with asthma and those without (42%). Among youth with current asthma, 78% had a flu vaccination within the past year.

- Get the [Avoid the Flu](#) handout for your patients from the Allergy and Asthma Foundation of America.
- For an update on flu in Vermont and links to national information, please visit the [Vermont Flu Activity and Surveillance web page](#).



**There is still plenty of flu vaccine to order through the VFC and VFA programs!**

## Research and Resources

Ask the Experts: If an unvaccinated patient who has just recovered from a laboratory-confirmed case of influenza comes to our clinic, should we vaccinate him?

Yes. Influenza vaccine contains three or four influenza vaccine virus strains; two A viruses and one or two B viruses, which are prepared based on circulating viruses from the previous influenza season. Infection from one virus type does not confer immunity to other types and it would not be unusual to be exposed to more than one type during a typical influenza season. So a person who has recently had influenza will benefit from receipt of a vaccine that contains additional influenza virus strains.

Experts from CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases address this and many other questions about vaccines in Immunize.org's Ask the Experts forum:

<http://www.immunize.org/askexperts/>