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**DATE: May 12, 2009**

**TO: Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program Providers**

**FROM: Immunization Program**

**RE: Limited Pediatric Hepatitis B Vaccine Supply**

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Since February, there has been intermittent limited supply of pediatric monovalent hepatitis B vaccine nationally and local providers have experienced shipment delays. **Despite these supply constraints, CDC has determined that there is sufficient pediatric hepatitis B vaccine available to continue the current hepatitis B recommendations for the remainder of 2009. However, providers will need to order hepatitis B containing vaccine judiciously to ensure there is sufficient product available for all providers.**

Providers are encouraged to order pediatric hepatitis B vaccine on a monthly basis. In addition, providers should only order enough vaccine to cover their needs for a 30-day period. Please do not order more vaccine than you can use in a 30-day period. In order to assure equitable vaccine distribution throughout the Vaccines for Children Program, the CDC has set monthly allocation limits for the number of doses each state will receive. Similar checks are being put in place for private sector orders.

CDC has worked with both Merck and GSK, the two manufacturers of pediatric monovalent hepatitis B vaccine, to determine how much vaccine will be available for the remainder of 2009. Merck expects to have a very limited supply and GSK plans to provide additional vaccine by September or October. Vaccine supply is anticipated to be very tight during the summer months. This will be especially true for Iowa providers as the current Iowa allocation is very limited.

At this time, Iowa providers should continue to administer pediatric hepatitis B vaccine according to the ACIP/AAP/AAFP 2009 childhood immunization schedule. However, given the current situation with the supply of pediatric hepatitis B vaccine, providers should not use VFC vaccine to combine two pediatric doses of hepatitis B (either product) to vaccinate an adult patient (>19 years old). While product labeling allows this practice for the Merck Recombivax HB product, doing so will diminish doses that are available for patients 19 and younger, especially high-risk infants born to HBsAg-positive mothers.

As this situation evolves, the Immunization Program will closely monitor the VFC supply of pediatric hepatitis B vaccine and keep you informed. If you have questions, please call the VFC Program at 1-800-831-6293.