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Terry E. Branstad Governor Kim Reynolds Lt. Governor

Director

Date: January 28, 2013

To: VFC Program Providers

From: VFC Program

Re: VFC Vaccine Storage and Handling - Discontinue Use of Dormitory Refrigerators

The Iowa Department of Public Health, Bureau of Immunization, would like to inform you of new Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program requirements and recommendations related to proper vaccine storage and handling practices. A new requirement from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) eliminates the use of dormitory or bar-style refrigerator/freezer units for storage of federally purchased vaccines under any circumstances, including temporary storage. Performance testing indicates dorm-style units cannot reliably maintain appropriate vaccine storage temperatures. A dorm-style refrigerator is defined as a small combination refrigerator/freezer unit that has one external door and an evaporator plate (cooling coil), which is usually located inside an icemaker compartment (freezer) within the refrigerator.

All VFC providers who use dorm-style units to store federally purchased VFC vaccines are required to replace it with a recommended storage unit by December 31, 2013.

The CDC recently updated and released the new Vaccine Storage and Handling Toolkit, November 2012. The toolkit includes information regarding the requirement to discontinue the use of dormitory refrigerators as well as many other vaccine storage and handling recommendations. The toolkit is available at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/storage/toolkit/default.htm. All healthcare providers that store vaccine should assess their current vaccine storage and handling practices and move toward implementing these recommendations.

If you have questions regarding the VFC Program vaccine storage and handling requirements and recommendations, please contact Tina Patterson at <u>Tina.Patterson@idph.iowa.gov</u> or 1-800-831-6293, ext. 4.