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Bulletin No. 21 November 14, 2014

Implementation Updates for the New Alaska Vaccine Assessment Program (AVAP)

Introduction

Year one of the Alaska Vaccine Assessment Program (AVAP) will commence in January 2015.¹ Payers (e.g., health care insurers and health benefit plans) will fund the account, based on an assessment of their proportionate share of the overall vaccine costs.¹ The DHSS Commissioner will determine the 2015 vaccine assessment rate for each payer based on the covered lives they serve. An independent Vaccine Assessment Council, to be appointed by the DHSS Commissioner, will determine future assessments and oversee the program.²

Key Information for Participating Payers

- The new AVAP law establishes all payers as potential participants in the Program starting January 1, 2015.
- Payers who participate in AVAP will save considerably on the cost of vaccines, which will be purchased by the State off a bulk contract. In other states, payers have saved up to 30% on vaccine costs after implementing their vaccine financing solutions.^{3,4}
- During the first 3 years of the Program, payers may opt-out of the assessment; however, participation by all eligible payers will be required in 2018. The goal is to have all eligible payers participate in AVAP in year one.
- By November 15th, payers need to provide AVAP with the number of Alaska children and adults that they covered during July through September 2014. Submit the information online (go to: www.AKvaccine.org).⁵
- November 19th, attend the Payer’s Call (Table; register at: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/431881932638125825>).
- By December 15th, the assessment rates will be published.
- By February 15th, payers need to pay their assessment fee.

Key Information for Health Care Providers

- Health care providers will be automatically enrolled to receive AVAP vaccine for all children and covered adults when they complete their annual Alaska Vaccine Distribution Program renewal process in January 2015.⁶
- ACIP-recommended childhood vaccines will be provided through AVAP for all non-VFC-eligible children using AVAP funds and residual state funds from HB 310.
- State-distributed AVAP vaccines will not need to be separated from Vaccine for Children (VFC) vaccines.
- Providers will not need to pay anything for the AVAP vaccine they receive for VFC-ineligible children and adults with 3rd party coverage. As such, providers may bill 3rd party payers for the vaccine *administration fee* for AVAP vaccine, but *not* for the cost of the vaccines.
- The vaccines that will be provided through AVAP for covered adults include the following: Tdap/Td, Pneumovax, Zostavax (for those aged 60–64 years), Menactra (for those aged 19–20 years), and HPV (for females aged 19–26 years and males aged 19–21 years).
- Since providers will likely have left-over private stock on January 1, 2015, AVAP will request that payers reimburse at the usual rate during the first few months of transition.
- Since Medicare will not be participating in AVAP in 2015, providers will need to privately-purchase vaccine for Medicare-eligible adults without another payer.
- AVAP will not provide influenza vaccine for the 2014–15 season, but will for the 2015–16 season.
- All vaccines administered in the State of Alaska must be reported into VacTrAK (see: 7 AAC 27.650(a)).
 - Report the AVAP vaccine funding source as *Public*.

- Use Eligibility code “V07” (State Vaccine, AVAP) to denote AVAP vaccine.
- Contact immune@alaska.gov with questions, or call 907-269-8000.

Providers Who Vaccinate Adults without a 3rd Party Payer

- Providers who immunize adults that do not have a 3rd party payer may *opt-in* to pay an assessment to receive the discounted state-supplied AVAP vaccine for these adults.
- Tribal facilities may opt-in to receive AVAP vaccine for adult beneficiaries without another (i.e., 3rd party) payer.
- By November 20th, providers who would like to opt-in must determine the number of adults aged ≥19 years with no 3rd party payer that they served in the past year, and provide that information to AVAP using the online survey form (available at: www.akvaccine.org).⁵ *Submitting the form does not obligate the provider to opt-in.*
- December 11th, attend the Provider’s Call (Table).
- By December 15th, AVAP will inform providers what their assessment rate would be.
- By December 31, providers will need to make their final decision on whether or not to opt-in to receive AVAP vaccine for uninsured adults.
- By February 15th, providers who have chosen to opt-in will need to pay their assessment fee.

Widespread Participation is Critical

The effectiveness of AVAP depends upon broad participation by payers and providers. With 100% participation, AVAP will 1) increase patient access to life-saving vaccines, 2) help curb the rising cost of vaccines for payers and providers, and 3) ease the burden on providers related to vaccine management.

Table: AVAP Timeline for Payers and Providers

Date	Activity
November 15	Payers must report covered lives to AVAP ⁵
November 19	Payer’s Teleconference (646-307-1705; participant code: 980-195-160)
November 20	Providers of adults without 3 rd party coverage who want to opt in must report their numbers served to AVAP ⁵
December 11	Provider Teleconference (12PM–1PM; 1-800-944-8766; participant code: 18108#)
December 15	Payers and opt-in providers will receive their vaccine assessment amount
December 31	Providers of adults without 3 rd party coverage must inform AVAP if they are going to opt-in
Mid-January	Providers complete their annual Vaccine Distribution Program enrollment and order vaccine through the Immunization Program ⁶
February 15	First assessment payment due for all payers

References

1. SOE Bulletin “Alaska’s New Vaccine Assessment Law: Increased Access to Vaccines at a Cost-Savings.” No. 14, August 13, 2014. Available at: http://www.epi.alaska.gov/bulletins/docs/b2014_14.pdf
2. Enrolled SB 169. State Vaccine Assessment Council. Available at: www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_bill_text.asp?hsid=SB0169Z&session=28
3. New Hampshire Vaccine Association webpage. Available at: <http://www.nhvaccine.org/nhvaccine.nsf/pages/home.html>
4. Washington Vaccine Association webpage. Available at: <http://www.wavaccine.org/wavaccine.nsf/pages/home.html>
5. AVAP homepage. Available at: www.AKvaccine.org
6. Alaska Immunization Program homepage. Available at: <http://www.epi.alaska.gov/id/immune.stm>