

March 25, 2020

Dear Immunization Provider,

Health care providers, local public health units, tribal health and many other health partners are working diligently in response to the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. **During this time, the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) recommends that routine vaccination, especially of infants, should continue.** This ensures that our communities remain free of vaccine preventable diseases and that individuals are as healthy as possible. If routine vaccination is postponed, we could be faced not only with a COVID-19 pandemic but an outbreak of vaccine preventable diseases, like measles. The [American Academy of Pediatrics \(AAP\)](#) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) have provided additional guidance about immunizations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Health care providers may need to be innovative about ensuring continuity of immunizations, including:

- screening patients for symptoms/travel prior to appointments,
- staggering appointments to reduce congestion in waiting rooms,
- cohorting ill patients at certain locations and continuing immunizations at other sites,
- working with local public health units,
- using drive thru vaccination clinics, and/or
- utilizing drive thru COVID-19 testing sites, so immunizations may be administered at usual locations.

If necessary, health care providers can delay immunizations for children older than 24 months and adults until the pandemic is older.

Additionally, North Dakota health care providers are encouraged to revisit their private influenza vaccine pre-booking orders for next fall and order additional doses of influenza vaccine, if possible. This fall, it will be more important than ever to vaccinate as many people as possible against influenza. Influenza vaccination will be critical to reducing illness and burden on our health care infrastructure.

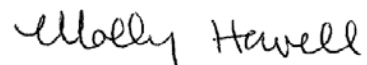
If healthcare facilities do close or decide to discontinue vaccination, all storage units that contain Vaccines For Children (VFC) Program vaccines must still have adequate storage and handling to ensure vaccine viability. **Data loggers must still be in place and**

min/max temperatures be checked and recorded at a minimum of two days per week. Data logger temperature charts must also be submitted to the immunization program monthly. All temperature excursions must be reported and followed up on accordingly.

If you have any questions, please contact the NDDoH Immunization Program at 701.328.3386 or toll-free 800.472.2180.

Thank you for your continued support of immunizations in North Dakota.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Molly Howell".

Molly Howell, MPH
Immunization Program Manager
Assistant Director of Disease Control