



State of Louisiana
Department of Health and Hospitals
Immunization Program

September 2, 2010

Dear Vaccines For Children provider:

In a statement published in June 2010, The Joint Commission required a 28 day expiration date for discard of multi-dose vials from the date of opening or puncture, unless the manufacturer specifies otherwise. **This dating expectation did not apply to vaccines in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and state immunization programs. (Standard MM.03.01.01, EP7)**

On July 20, 2010, The Joint Commission published a FAQ sheet on its website that further clarifies its requirements for the use of multi-dose vials and their expiration dates.

The new FAQ sheet exempts all vaccines from the 28 day rule and states: "The CDC Immunization Program states that vaccines are to be discarded per the manufacturer's expiration date. The Joint Commission is applying this approach to all vaccines (whether a part of the CDC or state immunization programs or purchased by healthcare facilities) with the understanding that the vaccines are stored and handled appropriately (correct temperature is maintained, frequency of temperature checks, etc). Following the guidelines provided in the package insert is very important to ensure integrity of the vaccine."

The complete Multi-dose Vial FAQs can be viewed through the following link:

http://www.jointcommission.org/AccreditationPrograms/LongTermCare/Standards/09_FAQs/MM/Multi-dose_Vials.htm

The Joint Commission also cited CDC as providing excellent resources regarding the use, storage and handling of vaccines at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp.htm>

Q. Do vaccines need to follow the 28 day rule?

A. Currently, vaccines are exempted from this requirement. The CDC Immunization Program states that vaccines are to be discarded per the manufacturer's expiration date. The Joint Commission is applying this approach to all vaccines (whether a part of the CDC or state immunization program or purchased by healthcare facilities) with the understanding that the vaccines are stored and handled appropriately (correct temperature is maintained, frequency of temperature checks, etc.). Following the guidelines provided in the package insert is very important to assure integrity of the vaccine.

The CDC has excellent resources regarding the use, storage and handling of vaccines at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp.htm>

Your help in distributing and sharing this information with others is appreciated.

Regards,

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