

March 20, 2020

Dear VFC Providers:

The Kentucky Immunization Branch is providing the following guidance based on AAP guidelines for well child visits and immunizations during the COVID-19 pandemic:

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) strongly supports the provision of well child care consistent with the Bright Futures Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents. In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the benefit of attending a well visit and receiving necessary immunizations and screenings should be balanced with the risk of exposure to other children and adults with potential contagious diseases. These recommendations are based on available evidence and should be considered in the context of your patient population and practice environment. The AAP is pursuing a robust advocacy agenda to enable practice adjustments during this pandemic and mitigate negative effects.

Currently, the guidance from AAP during the COVID-19 pandemic with regard to well visits includes considering modifications to the structure of your clinic schedule and physical space. **Immunizing the youngest children is top priority in the context of well child care.** This guidance is subject to change as new evidence on the SARS-CoV-2 virus emerges. Providers should consider community spread of COVID-19 and the volume of sick patients that they are currently seeing in clinical settings, as they make decisions regarding their clinical practice. Practices may consider several adjustments to their usual clinical operations:

- Providers may choose to only conduct well visits for newborns, and for infants and younger children who require immunizations and to reschedule well visits for those in middle childhood and adolescence to a later date.
- Providers may choose to limit well visits to early morning while reserving the remainder of the day for sick visits.
- Providers are encouraged to dedicate specific rooms for sick visits and well visits; or for those with multiple practice sites to consider using one office location to see all well visits (staffed by those in higher risk categories).
- Providers may choose to increase their capacity to deliver telehealth.
- If available, Providers are encouraged to utilize “drive through” dedicated COVID-19 testing sites.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has developed guidance that is relevant to the way pediatric practices approach caring for children. For patients and families who may have been exposed to SARS-CoV-2, the CDC has developed [What Healthcare Personnel Should Know about Caring for Patients with Confirmed or Possible COVID-19 Infection.](#)

In addition, they have [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) in Healthcare Settings.](#)

CDC provides [guidance for administering vaccines](#) when a child is sick.

Additional recommendations during this time for clinics who may have sent some staff to work from home:

Staff who are teleworking can pull your clinics immunization rates from your electronic health record (EHR) or from the Kentucky Immunization Registry (KYIR) to prepare for getting children up to date before the next school year.

Prepare a list of school age and adolescents who will need to update their immunizations once your clinic operations return to normal.

Thank you for continuing to care for and immunize Kentucky's children.

Sincerely,



Emily Messerli DNP, APRN, FNP-C
Immunization Branch Manager
Kentucky Department for Public Health