



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –
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Back-To-School Immunizations Are Essential: Plan ahead to ensure students are ready

FAYETTEVILLE – The N.C. Division of Public Health and the Cumberland County Public Health Department urge parents to plan ahead to see that children are properly immunized for the new school year.

“We want parents to know that by law, their children must be up-to-date on their required immunizations to start school. Vaccines are a safe and effective way to help individuals protect themselves, their families, and loved ones from disease,” Buck Wilson, Cumberland County’s Public Health Director, said.

An estimated 67 percent of North Carolina’s children qualify for the federally-funded Vaccines for Children (VFC) program, which provides vaccinations for eligible children through age 18. To qualify a child must be: Medicaid eligible; American Indian or Alaskan Native; uninsured or underinsured. Underinsured means a child has health insurance, but it won’t cover the vaccine(s) because it doesn’t cover any vaccines, it doesn’t cover certain vaccines, or it covers vaccines, but it has a fixed dollar limit or cap for vaccines. Once that fixed dollar amount has been reached, a child is eligible.

There is no fee for the cost of VFC vaccine for eligible children; however, a provider may charge a fee to administer the vaccine. Parents who want to participate should contact their health care provider; the Public Health Department at 433-3600; or visit <http://www.immunizenc.com/vfcinfo.htm>.

Recent changes to the North Carolina Immunization Program (NCIP) mean that free, state-funded vaccines are no longer provided to insured children. Insured families may be able to take

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advantage of \$3 million in one-time funding approved by the N.C. General Assembly to provide a limited amount of free vaccine during the transition away from the state-funded program.

The vaccine will be distributed to children entering kindergarten through 8th grade by the Public Health Department. Once the supply of free vaccine is depleted, patients with insurance will need to use their insurance plan to receive vaccine services. In some cases, this may require a co-pay or deductible.

Parents should check with their health care provider or insurance provider to find out which vaccines and vaccine services are covered by their plans. For details on school immunization requirements in North Carolina, visit

<http://www.immunizenc.com/SchoolReqs.htm#requirements>.

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