Training Resources for MAs in California VFC Offices

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**BACKGROUND**

Medical Assistants (MAs) do the lion’s share of vaccine management, preparation and administration in California’s 4400+ VFC provider offices. MAs have few professional opportunities to support their ongoing education, particularly their immunization skills and competencies.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

California’s size and limited fiscal resources prohibit frequent “live” trainings and office in-services. To address these barriers, California Department of Public Health (CDPH) creates and provides a variety of training resources for MAs working in VFC offices. Our job aids and resources can reinforce necessary immunization skills, provide new information, or communicate late-breaking news.

VFC providers and their staff are notified about new e-products via email. VFC Field Staff also promote items and distribute limited hard-copy supplies. All items are available for downloading from EZIZ.ORG.

Content and subjects are prioritized based on field input, new mandates, and “hot” topics. For example, in 2008 and 2009, vaccine storage and handling were among our top priorities, and focus shifted to H1N1 in 2009 and into 2010.

**JOB AIDS**

Immunization is a dynamic field, and information and recommendations change frequently. Eye-catching reference sheets written in simple language help reinforce MAs’ key immunization skills and competencies. All items are available for downloading from EZIZ.ORG.

**MONTHLY VACCINE TIPS FAXES**

CDPH blasts simple reminders about VFC guidelines and policies. The information is meant to reinforce, not instruct. When appropriate, reference links and images are included. Liberal white space makes for easy reading and minimizes toner!

**EZIZ.ORG ONLINE TRAINING MODULES**

Fun, free, interactive, competency-based training modules are available on EZIZ.ORG. Choose from Preparing Vaccines, Administering Vaccines and Storing Vaccines. Use EZIZ modules in new staff orientation or as a refresher for more senior staff. Additional modules are under development.

**WEB STATS (JAN. 2008–MAR. 2009)**

- 766,414 Pageviews
- 74,740 Absolute Unique Visitors
- Top Downloads: Vaccine Order Form (CDPH-8501): 11,210

**“LIVE” TRAININGS AND UPDATES**

CDPH and VFC continue to promote “live” educational opportunities for MAs. In-person training offers benefits that reference sheets, faxes and online training cannot offer.

Immunization Skills Institute (ISI) is a course written to comply with California law and regulations. It combines lecture, videos, and mentor-led practice sessions that are structured to increase Medical Assistants’ competency in the safe, effective, and caring delivery of immunizations.

VFC Office Visits: VFC Field Staff provide necessary skills training during routine QNs and offer specialized in-services on request.

**LESSONS LEARNED**

- Immunization information is dynamic
- It is critical for everyone working in immunization to stay current
- Messages must be tailored to the audience
- Learning styles must be considered when developing resources
- Communication and distribution methods must be considered during development of new items
- Redundant systems allow for reinforcement of key messages
- Systems should be in place to communicate both routine (e.g. new ACIP recommendations, ordering information) and late-breaking news (e.g. outbreaks, recalls)

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