



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM

**TO: Birth Hospitals and Pertussis Vaccination Referral Sites for Postpartum Families**

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**SUBJECT: Department of Public Health (DPH) Sponsored Pertussis Cocoon Program**

Public health officials recommend pertussis (whooping cough) vaccination for all persons who have close contact with infants. This strategy is known as “cocooning” i.e. putting a protective cocoon of immunity around the infant. Studies have shown that infants with pertussis are often infected by their parents, particularly their mothers, at least half of the time. Therefore vaccinating parents against pertussis is an important way to protect infants.

The Connecticut DPH Immunization Program established a Cocoon Program to protect newborns during the summer of 2008. The program’s goal is to facilitate the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practice’s (ACIP) recommendation that new mothers who have not previously received the pertussis-containing vaccine Tdap (Tetanus-diphtheria-acellular pertussis) be vaccinated in the immediate postpartum period, prior to hospital discharge. The program has also made Tdap available to fathers and age-eligible infant contacts (i.e. siblings, grandparents, infant caregivers) as well as hospital health care workers. Often vaccination of family members is accomplished through hospital referral to a pre-arranged hospital-based clinic or local health department. The vaccine is available **free of cost** to birth hospitals and referral sites. Enrolled sites cannot charge for the vaccine, but can charge a vaccine administration fee not to exceed \$21.

### **Patient Eligibility**

**All age eligible post-partum women and fathers, mothers and fathers of NICU babies, adoptive families, and household contacts and caregivers of infants aged less than 12 months are eligible to receive the Tdap vaccine.** The Tdap product in use for this project is Adacel (Sanofi Pasteur), available as a package of 10 single dose vials; Adacel is licensed for one-time use in people age 11 through 64 years.

Changes to the ACIP Tdap recommendations are expected to be published in the near future, and include the following updates:

- Permissive, off label use of the vaccine for those aged 65 and older;
- Removal of the language about suggested intervals between receiving the tetanus-diphtheria (Td) vaccine and Tdap vaccine;
- Allowing children ages 7 to 10 years who aren't completely vaccinated against pertussis to receive the Tdap vaccine.

Please check the ACIP web page available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/acip/default.htm> for the latest updates. The new provisional Tdap recommendations should be available on the web site soon.

All patients should be screened for immunization status and history of Tdap prior to the administration of vaccine; however, if there is a lack of written documentation or a lack of positive verbal history regarding previous receipt of Tdap, the patient should be considered eligible and the vaccine administered.

## **Eligible Sites and General Requirements**

To be eligible for participation in this program, the following requirements must be met:

1. Site must be a birth hospital, local health department, hospital-based clinic, or community-based health center. Sites other than birth hospitals will serve as referral locations for eligible infant caregivers and family members, and must coordinate a referral system with the partnering birth hospital. In addition, referral sites should be located within a reasonable distance from the hospital;
2. Currently have or will institute a post-partum pertussis immunization program/policy in order to receive Tdap vaccine (which includes patient eligibility screening);
3. Have on-site clinical staff experienced in administering vaccine to adults;
4. Have a plan for integration of vaccination into existing services;
5. Have an acceptable refrigerator-only unit(s) for the storage of vaccine that meets the Immunization Program's requirements and be willing to store, handle, and administer vaccine according to the Immunization Program guidelines;
6. Agree to report the number of Tdap doses administered and current vaccine inventory on a monthly basis as described on the Tdap vaccine order form.

**Even hospitals that are currently privately purchasing Tdap vaccine are eligible to enroll in the state-sponsored cocoon program.**

## **Participation in the Tdap Cocoon Program**

Sites interested in participating in the Tdap cocoon program that are not currently enrolled should call Kathy Kudish or Mick Bolduc of the Immunization Program at 860 509-7929 for more information about program requirements. In general a meeting is set up with the DPH Immunization Program and interested hospital staff to discuss current patient screening recommendations, family member referrals, and hospital healthcare worker Tdap immunization.

After discussion between Immunization Program staff and the interested site(s) regarding program requirements, sites may participate in the program by completing a simple enrollment form and signing a Provider Agreement. Once this has been received and it has been confirmed by DPH that your facility is an active participant in the cocoon program, you may begin ordering vaccine. Enrollment may be incumbent upon a site visit to verify storage units if the site is not already receiving state supplied vaccine through the Vaccines For Children (VFC) Program. Please note that all providers of state supplied vaccines are required to have refrigerator-only units for the storage of vaccine (dormitory-style refrigerators are not acceptable). We would encourage birth hospitals that are not VFC providers to enroll in the VFC program, which will also enable the hospital to offer the hepatitis B birth dose to infants.

## **Vaccine Orders**

**A new Tdap Project Vaccine Order Form has been developed and should be used to order vaccine for this program.** Participating sites can submit vaccine orders by completing the form and faxing it to (860) 509-8371. All providers may order on a monthly basis for this project. Vaccine orders will not be processed unless vaccine doses administered since the last shipment and current Tdap vaccine inventory are included on the order form.

Downloadable versions of the Tdap Cocoon Program materials, including enrollment and vaccine order forms will be coming soon to the Immunization Program's web page at:

[www.ct.gov/dph/immunizations](http://www.ct.gov/dph/immunizations).

If you have any questions relating to this project, please contact Kathy Kudish or Mick Bolduc at 860 509-7929.