

**To: Health Care Providers, Hospitals, and Local Health Departments**

**From: New York State Department of Health, Bureau of Immunization**

**Date: September 7, 2011**

**Re: Guidance on Maintaining and Determining Vaccine Viability During and Following a Power Outage**

Many New York State (NYS) health care providers and health care facilities experienced power outages affecting their vaccine storage units during or as a result of Hurricane Irene. The information below is to provide guidance on maintaining and determining vaccine viability during and following a power outage. During a power outage, it is possible that vaccines will reach temperatures that are higher than the recommended range of 35 degrees Fahrenheit to 46 degrees Fahrenheit.

### **1. Before a Power Outage**

In advance of any emergency with the anticipated potential for power outage, all providers should identify the following:

- an alternative storage facility (hospital, packing plant, etc.), with back-up power (generator), where the vaccine can be properly stored and monitored for the duration of the power outage,
- the availability of staff to pack and move the vaccine, and
- appropriate packing containers and cold packs.

Contact the NYS Vaccine Program at 1-800-KID-SHOT (1-800-543-7468) prior to transporting any publicly-purchased vaccine.

### **2. During a Power Outage**

Do not open the vaccine storage unit(s) until power has been restored or until immediately before transporting vaccine to an alternative storage facility with back-up power.

### **3. Following Restoration of Power or Vaccine Transportation to an Alternative Storage Facility**

The viability and potency of vaccine depends upon the type of vaccine and the period of time that the vaccine remained out of the recommended storage temperature range. Vaccines that are not stored at appropriate temperatures may not protect against disease.

In order to determine the viability of vaccines affected by power outages, providers should:

- **Measure and record the temperature** in the vaccine storage unit(s) at the time of power restoration or just prior to vaccine transportation to an alternative storage facility since this is likely to be the highest temperature at which vaccine has been stored. Some thermometers record minimum and maximum temperatures in addition to current temperature; the maximum temperature should be recorded if it is known.
- **Do not discard the vaccines.** Mark the vaccines so that potentially compromised vaccines can be easily identified. Do **not** use the vaccines until vaccine viability has been determined.
- **Determine whether the vaccine storage unit(s) is working properly.** If the unit is not working properly, move the vaccine to an alternate storage unit that is working properly.
- **Call the vaccine manufacturer(s)** for a determination of vaccine viability. The manufacturer will need to know:
  - the type of vaccines affected,
  - number of doses,

- expiration dates,
  - lot numbers,
  - duration of power outage, and
  - maximum vaccine storage temperature during the power outage or temperature at the time of power restoration.
- **If the manufacturer(s) say any vaccine is non-viable (unusable),** call 1-800-KID-SHOT (1-800-543-7468) for instructions on returning publicly purchased vaccine.

Any vaccine that has been exposed to elevated temperatures and is determined to be viable should be used before administering any newer vaccines.

#### 4. Important Phone Numbers

- Vaccine Manufacturers

Sanofi Pasteur	1-800-822-2463	Ask to speak with a nurse
Merck	1-800-672-6372	Medical Services/Information
Glaxo SmithKline Beecham	1-888-825-5249	Product Information Department
Pfizer (formally known as Wyeth)	1-800-572-8221	Medical/Technical Support (select option#4)
Novartis Vaccines	1-800-244-7668	Information
MedImmune Inc	1-877-633-4411	Information

- New York State Department of Health Bureau of Immunization: 518-473-4437
- NYS Vaccine Program: 1-800-KID-SHOT (1-800-543-7468)
- New York State Department of Health Bureau of Immunization Regional Representatives:

**Western Regional Office**

Buffalo: 716-847-4385

Rochester: 585-423-8014

**Central New York Regional Office**

Syracuse: 315-477-8164

**Capital District Regional Office**

Troy: 518-408-5278

**Metropolitan Area Regional Office**

New Rochelle: 914-654-7149

Central Islip: 631-851-3096

Monticello: 845-794-5627