



**Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services**

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**Gail Vasterling**  
Acting Director



**Jeremiah W. (Jay) Nixon**  
Governor

July 22, 2013

Dear Vaccines for Children Program Provider:

To ensure vaccines are stored safely and remain effective, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has developed interim guidance on vaccine storage and handling. This new guidance has thermometer guidelines to ensure better detection of the holding temperatures of the vaccines rather than measuring the ambient air temperature around the vaccines.

In response to the new guidance, on January 1, 2014 the Missouri Vaccines for Children (VFC) program will **require** all VFC providers to have in each vaccine storage unit, a thermometer that must:

- be a certified, calibrated thermometer;
- have a certificate of traceability and calibration due date;
- be a biosafe glycol-encased probe (i.e., probe suspended in glycol) that will measure liquid temperature; and
- have a sensor bulb that is located in the middle of the unit and not in a protective holder that is in direct contact with the floor, walls or back of the unit. Thermometers already built into the cooling unit will not be acceptable.

All thermometers must be calibrated or re-calibrated by a laboratory that is accredited by an International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation Mutual Recognition Arrangement (ILAC MRA) signatory body that meets the requirements for traceability. If calibration testing determines the thermometer is no longer accurate within  $\pm 1^{\circ} \text{F}$  ( $\pm 5^{\circ} \text{C}$ ) then the thermometer must be replaced.

In addition, DHSS **recommends** the thermometer:

- be digital;
- provide continuous data monitoring information in an active display;
- have data that is easily downloadable for review; and
- have a readout that can be placed on the outside of the unit door to allow for reading temperatures without opening the unit door.

For more information on thermometers, please find the attached informational sheet of internet resources for thermometers that meet the above requirements. This list of web-sites is not all-inclusive, rather examples.

The VFC program appreciates your commitment to immunize Missouri's children with safe and effective vaccines. Please contact your VFC liaison at 800.219.3224 or your Immunization Quality Manager with any questions.

Sincerely,

Julie Boeckman, VFC/AFIX Coordinator  
Bureau of Immunization Assessment and Assurance

Attachment

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