

## PROVIDER MEMO

**To:** Santa Clara Family Health Plan Providers  
**From:** Laurie Nakahira, Chief Medical Officer  
**Date:** June 1, 2020  
**Subject:** Prioritizing childhood immunization visits amidst COVID-19

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Dear providers,

We understand that maintaining immunizations during this period may be difficult. The current condition of COVID-19 transmission and the impact it has on the community affects your staff and staff's resources, not to mention handling concerns from parents and other patients. However, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that **we must prioritize childhood immunizations** to the best of our ability. Here are some helpful tips:

- If your practice can only provide limited well-child visits, prioritize newborn care and vaccination of infants and young children (through 24 months of age) when possible.
- Separate well-visits from sick visits. For example, book well-visits in the morning and sick visits in the afternoon.
- Separate patients spatially (e.g., contain sick visits to one area).

To reassure parents, the CDC has some talking points to show how the clinic is practicing safe measures:

- "We are taking several precautions to help keep our patients safe, including scheduling baby shot visits in the morning and only seeing sick children in the afternoon."
- "We're screening everyone who comes into the office, including taking everyone's temperature."
- "We disinfect our clinic twice daily and disinfect exam rooms after each visit."
- "We have designated certain areas to separate sick patients from healthy patients."
- "All of us wear masks, at all times."
- "We're spacing out appointments so only one patient is at the clinic at any given time."

Emphasize to parents that preventable diseases will continue to be a threat to children. Inform parents that getting children caught up on vaccines later may not be so easy. CDC suggests the following talking point:

- "When California 'reopens,' there may be many children who need to catch up on immunizations, increasing wait times for appointments. While waiting, they could be exposed to dangerous vaccine-preventable diseases circulating in the community. Let's avoid that danger by keeping your child on track."

We thank you and your staff for your continued commitment during this time. If you have any questions, please contact Provider Services at [ProviderServices@scfhp.com](mailto:ProviderServices@scfhp.com).