

Tracking Immunizations: The New Mexico Statewide Immunization Information System (NMSIIS)

One of the most difficult challenges faced by providers of vaccines to patients is the lack of an accurate immunization record. Parents and patients move or change medical providers, hand-carried records get lost or damaged and sending for medical records is time consuming. Without an accurate record, patients may get over- or under-vaccinated. The New Mexico Statewide Immunization Information System (NMSIIS) is designed to help providers and other authorized users access immunization records in an accurate and timely manner.

What is NMSIIS?

NMSIIS is a confidential, web-based, immunization information system that keeps immunization records of people vaccinated in New Mexico. Using NMSIIS, medical providers can obtain up-to-date, accurate immunization records for patients immunized in New Mexico, even if that patient is new to the practice.

What is the financial impact of NMSIIS to my practice?

There is no charge for using NMSIIS, either to enter data or to retrieve it. In fact, there is a financial benefit. In return for participating in NMSIIS, the state orders, purchases, and distributes vaccine for all children under 19 years of age to Vaccines for Children (VFC) providers regardless of VFC eligibility criteria or insurance status. In states without a universal purchase policy, practitioners must maintain an inventory of expensive vaccines to use for children not eligible to participate in the VFC program that can run into tens of thousands of dollars. Additionally, some Managed Care Organizations are offering providers an incentive of \$5 per billing at an immunization visit where information is entered in NMSIIS. Code used is 99080 (special reports). See below for some of the other benefits of participating in NMSIIS.

What benefits does NMSIIS provide to my practice?

- Easy access to accurate and consolidated immunizations records of patients in your practice.
- ✓ Up-to-date guidance on recommended immunizations. NMSIIS offers a list of immunizations that are recommended for each patient based on the patient's previous immunizations. The recommendations come from the *CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)* and will be updated as needed. This guidance, along with provider judgment and patient preference, can optimize a patient's protection from vaccine preventable diseases.
- Reminder and recall lists and letters. Reminders of immunizations due and recall of patients who have missed opportunities for immunization have been shown to increase practices' immunization rates.
- ✓ Assistance with vaccine inventory. This function allows practices to track vaccine inventory. NMSIIS transmits inventory doses-administered to the VFC Program's Vaccine Online ordering system which enables providers to show need for additional vaccines.
- ✓ Quality analysis. As part of a new national emphasis on quality care, practices are increasingly being asked to provide documentation of quality indices. Agencies such as third-party payors, governmental regulators and assessment agencies, for example, the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA), may request data on a practice's immunization rates. NMSIIS can help with reports on immunization rates and providers can then problem solve to find ways of improving rates. This is important because reimbursement is increasingly moving to a pay-for-performance system.
- Reduced paperwork and time saved. Reduced hassle with finding immunization records, generating reports and maintaining vaccine inventory.
- ✓ Reduced phone calls and requests for records to your practice. School nurses and others needing immunization records can access information on their clients' immunizations without having to go through your practice, which can result in potential cost savings.

Is NMSIIS HIPAA compliant?

Yes. New Mexico law sets forth the categories of users who can have access to NMSIIS and the purposes for which this information can be used. Users include physicians, nurses and other appropriate health care providers, managed care organizations and public health entities. All entry into the site is monitored and password protected. All users must sign an agreement and follow strict confidentiality and security policies.

Can NMSIIS exchange data with Electronic Medical Records?

Electronic transfer of information between electronic medical record systems and NMSIIS has been implemented; providers wishing to sign up for electronic data exchange can do so at <u>www.nmhit.org</u>.

What type of equipment does my practice need to access NMSIIS?

Your practice will need a PC running Windows, high speed internet access (although dial-up may work) and Internet Explorer 6 or higher. Macintosh users may be able to access NMSIIS. Since the service was set to be used on Internet Explorer, there may be some problems with other browsers. NMSIIS Program staff can assist you if you have technical questions. Ask for assistance through the NMSIIS Help Line, see below.

What type of training will the medical personnel need to interface with NMSIIS?

Free training is available to physicians, nurses, medical assistants and other medical professionals who will be using the NMSIIS system and can be scheduled by calling the DOH Help Desk. Access to NMSIIS is established after training has been completed.

Training will soon be available online. To request training and access, contact the NMSIIS Help Line, information below.

For further information

NMSIIS website: <u>https://nmsiis.health.state.nm.us/PR/portalInfoManager.do</u> NMSIIS Help Line: 505-476-8526 or 800-280-1618 *(Option 1 during usual hours, 6am-6pm, Monday-Friday; Option 4 at all other times)* For information about immunizations in general, contact the CDC immunization website, <u>http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/</u> or call CDC Information Contact Center at 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636).