



ALAMANCE COUNTY

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Prepare to Pay: Required Immunizations Will Add to Back-to-School Expenses

BURLINGTON – While families are out shopping during this year’s annual tax free weekend, parents and guardians will want to factor in additional costs for immunizations, an expense that in most cases, did not exist on last year’s back-to-school list.

Recent changes to the North Carolina Immunization Program (NCIP), due to cuts in the state budget, mean that free, state-funded vaccines are no longer provided to insured children. Children with Medicaid or who are uninsured will still be able to receive vaccine provided by the NCIP at no cost. Insured families may be able to take advantage of \$3 million in one-time funding approved by the N.C. General Assembly to provide a limited amount of free vaccine during the transition away from the state-funded program. The vaccine will be available to children entering kindergarten through 8th grade. However, it will be in limited supply and available on a first come, first served basis. Local health departments, as well as area providers, should be receiving the vaccine in mid-August. Once the supply of free vaccine is depleted, patients with insurance will need to use their insurance plan to receive vaccine services. In some cases, this may require a co-pay or deductible.

Beginning Monday, advance payment may be required when presenting for immunization services at the Alamance County Health Department. This practice is very similar to those already in place at many private physician offices.

(MORE)



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The health department will file insurance and bill for any uncovered balance or you may elect to pay the full cost and self-file with your insurance provider. In addition, as a cost savings to the patients and families, the health department will waive the administration fee, a fee that is traditionally charged by many health care providers for giving a vaccine.

Before visiting the health department, individuals and families should plan ahead. The following steps are **strongly recommended** and will eliminate any unexpected surprises, as well as expedite your visit:

- Please contact your insurance provider in advance to determine if immunizations are covered through your insurance plan. Some insurance providers may pay for some, but not all immunizations.
- Be prepared to pay out-of-pocket at the time of service. The health department does not participate with all insurance companies.
- Please bring insurance cards and immunization records for all family members receiving immunizations. This will allow us to accurately file insurance and prevent any duplication of immunizations already received.

The Alamance County Health Department is committed to making sure school-aged and college-bound students are ready to learn, by making sure immunizations required by law are up-to-date. For questions or more information about these upcoming changes, please call (336) 227-0101.

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