

**Southern California Meningococcal Disease Outbreak
Frequently Asked Questions for Medical Providers and Pharmacists
on the Reimbursement of Meningococcal Vaccination of Persons \geq 19 Years of Age**

To contain the current outbreak, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) strongly encourages all healthcare providers to offer MenACWY vaccine (MCV4), Menactra[®] (Sanofi Pasteur) or Menveo[®] (GlaxoSmithKline) to the following groups of patients:

- Men who have sex with men (MSM) residing in Los Angeles (including Long Beach), Orange, and San Diego counties.
- MSM traveling to Los Angeles (including Long Beach) or Orange Counties. To be effective, vaccination should occur at least 2 weeks prior to travel.
- All persons with HIV infection (statewide).

For more information, see CDPH's [Health Advisory](#).

[CDPH is recommending](#) that adults over 55 years of age in the risk groups listed above receive the meningococcal conjugate vaccine, even though this vaccine is not licensed by the Food and Drug Administration for this age group.

The first five questions of this FAQ are for medical providers and clinics. FAQs on reimbursement in pharmacies start with Question #6.

MEDICAL PROVIDERS AND CLINICS

1. What if my clinic does not currently stock meningococcal conjugate vaccine?

If you don't currently stock MenACWY vaccine, please consider doing so. For immunizations your office purchases, inquire about credit/return policies for any unused expired doses.

If you are not able to stock this vaccine, please assist your patients in obtaining the vaccine by following the steps outlined below:

- a. **Make a strong recommendation and referral** for your patient to receive the vaccine off-site, stressing the importance of receiving the vaccine and addressing any safety concerns.
- b. **Provide patients with a prescription.** Although a prescription for the MenACWY vaccine is not needed, it may reinforce the importance of your recommendation.
- c. **Assist patients in locating a local immunization provider/clinic that is covered by their insurance.** Convenient meningococcal vaccination sites can be found by going to the CDC's SoCal meningococcal outbreak informational page at <http://bit.do/menoutbreak>. Refer to Question #2 below for insurance-specific information regarding vaccine coverage.
- d. **When referring patients to be vaccinated off-site, ensure patients' ability to travel off-site and that the clinic or pharmacy will administer MenACWY to your patient:**

- i. Medi-Cal managed care plans (MCPs). If your practice is having difficulty ensuring that MCP patients receive MenACWY, contact the respective plan's [provider services number](#). For issues that cannot be resolved by calling the Medi-Cal MCP, please contact the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) [Office of the Ombudsman](#) at 1-888-452-8609 (office hours are Monday through Friday, 8am to 5pm PST; excluding holidays) or MMCDombudsmanOffice@dhcs.ca.gov. DHCS recommends calling the Ombudsman for any issues that require the inclusion of confidential data.
- ii. Commercial health plans. Providers with questions regarding the coverage of the vaccine by a specific commercial plan, please contact the provider helpline for that specific health plan.

If your issue is still not resolved after taking the steps outlined above, please contact [your local health department](#).

2. Is the quadrivalent meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MenACWY or MCV4) covered by insurance when administered in a medical provider office?

Yes. See additional information specific to each type of insurance below.

A. Medi-Cal

Both Medi-Cal Managed Care and Medi-Cal fee for service (FFS) cover MenACWY and all other immunizations recommended by the federal Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). No prior authorization is required.

- ACIP recommendations include vaccination of persons at risk in an outbreak of meningococcal disease.
- ACIP voted on [June 22, 2016](#) to recommend that all persons with HIV infection who are two months of age and older be routinely vaccinated with MenACWY vaccine. A primary series for persons with HIV infection is two doses of MenACWY 8-12 weeks apart. Previously vaccinated HIV-infected persons who received only 1 dose of vaccine should receive a second dose at the earliest opportunity, at least 8 weeks after the previous dose. A booster dose should be given every 5 years if the previous dose was administered at ≥ 7 years of age.

Note that the Medi-Cal Provider Manual¹ may not yet reflect current ACIP recommendations, and activation of the FFS reimbursement mechanism may be delayed, but there is a provision for retroactive billing.

B. Commercial plans; Plans participating in Covered CA

Individuals enrolled in new group or individual health plans on or after September 23, 2010 (non-grandfathered plans) will have access to the vaccines recommended by ACIP with no co-payments or other cost-sharing requirements when those services are delivered by an in-network provider. ACIP recommended vaccines must be covered in the next plan year that starts one year after the effective date of the recommendation. <http://www.hhs.gov/healthcare/facts/factsheets/2010/09/The-Affordable-Care-Act-and-Immunization.html>

Please check coverage by calling the commercial insurer company or the prescription plan specified on the member's health insurance identification card.

¹ Specific details may be found in the Medi-Cal Provider Manual under various sections such as General Medicine or Obstetrics under the sections "Immunizations (immun)" and "Immunization Code List (immun cd)." See http://files.medi-cal.ca.gov/pubsdoco/Manuals_menu.asp.

Covered CA. MenACWY is considered a preventive service and is thus fully covered with no out-of-pocket cost to the member by insurance providers participating in the exchange. Members should contact their Health Plan to find out how they can obtain the vaccine.

Note that:

- Most Health Maintenance Organizations only cover the vaccine at an in-network provider under the medical benefit.
- Other plans will cover the vaccine at no cost at either an in-network pharmacy or in-network medical providers.
- Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) members may get the vaccine at an out-of-network provider, in which situation they will be charged a copay for the service.

More information regarding MenACWY coverage by each of the Covered California-contracted health plans can be accessed at:

http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/immunize/Documents/CoveredCA_Table.pdf

3. How do medical providers bill for meningococcal vaccine?

Providers should bill for vaccine and administration in the same way that they bill for other vaccination services. Please contact the health plan’s provider information line with billing and reimbursement questions. Potential relevant billing codes are provided below:

CODE	CPT DESCRIPTION
90734	Meningococcal conjugate vaccine, serogroups A, C, Y and W-135 quadrivalent, for intramuscular use. Coding Tip: Brand name(s): Menactra [®] , Menveo [®]
90471	Administration (includes percutaneous, intradermal, subcutaneous, or intramuscular) 1 vaccine (single or combination vaccine/toxoid)
90472	Each additional vaccine (single or combination vaccine/toxoid) (List separately in addition to Code for primary procedure)

ICD-10-CM Diagnosis Code Z23 Encounter for immunizations.

4. What can a medical provider do if faced with difficulties for being reimbursed for an immunization or has questions on billing or reimbursement?

If a Medi-Cal provider faces difficulties being reimbursed for a FFS patient, the provider should contact the Medi-Cal Provider Helpline at 1-800-541-5555.

Providers should bring immunization payment issues for Medi-Cal Managed Care patients to the specific plan's provider [line](#).

Providers with questions regarding a commercial plan's billing and reimbursement procedures, please contact the provider helpline for that specific health plan.

If an immunization reimbursement problem is not resolved after taking the steps above, the provider may contact the local or state immunization program, as appropriate.

5. For medical providers who administer recommended vaccines to adults 19 years and older who are in the Medi-Cal fee for service (FFS) program, how much are they reimbursed under FFS Medi-Cal?

Providers are reimbursed for the vaccine plus \$4.46 for an injection (administration) fee. Vaccine reimbursement is set at the Medicare rate of reimbursement if a Medicare rate for that vaccine is available. If there is no Medicare rate, reimbursement is at the Pharmacy rate, defined as the lowest of:

- (1) The average wholesale price (AWP)-17%,
- (2) The federal upper limit (FUL), or
- (3) The maximum allowable ingredient cost (MAIC).

Medi-Cal reimbursement rates: http://files.medi-cal.ca.gov/pubsdoco/rates/rates_information.asp?num=21&first=87850&last=94772.

Medi-Cal immunization billing guidelines: http://files.medi-cal.ca.gov/pubsdoco/publications/masters-mtp/part2/immun_m00o03o04o11p00.doc.

PHARMACISTS

Advertising that your pharmacy carries the meningococcal conjugate vaccine is as important as offering the vaccine. Pharmacies should verify that they are listed on the HealthMap Vaccine Finder website (<http://vaccinefinder.org>) and that the site contains the correct information, including the availability of MenACWY (or MCV4). Much like advertising the flu vaccine, placing signs inside and in front of the pharmacy regarding the availability of the meningococcal vaccine is a valuable communication strategy.

6. What if my pharmacy does not currently stock meningococcal conjugate vaccine?

We strongly encourage all providers to offer MenACWY vaccine for all patients at risk. If you don't currently stock MenACWY vaccine, please consider ordering adequate supplies. Inquire about credit/return policies for any unused expired doses. For pharmacies ordering from distributors, please contact your distributor about credit policies.

7. Are MenACWY vaccines given by pharmacists covered by insurance?

Yes. See additional information specific to each type of insurance below.

A. Medi-Cal fee for service (FFS)

Meningococcal conjugate vaccine (Menactra[®] and Menveo[®]) is available as a pharmacy benefit for Medi-Cal FFS for adults 19 years and older for ACIP indications (see question 2A). The vaccine is covered for individuals without a Treatment Authorization Request (TAR) or Service Authorization Request (SAR). See Medi-Cal Contract Drug List for details.

[CDPH is recommending](#) that adults over 55 years of age in the risk groups listed above receive the meningococcal conjugate vaccine, even though this vaccine is not licensed by the Food and Drug Administration for this age group. Medi-Cal FFS pharmacy covers this vaccine for adults 55 years and older, if indicated, even though it is considered “off label.”

B. Medi-Cal Managed Care

Please check with the health plan:

- Whether or not MenACWY is currently a covered benefit for pharmacies and
- Whether your pharmacy is in the Managed Care plan (MCP’s) network for reimbursement.

At the time of immunization, pharmacies can check the member’s Medi-Cal card to see if the vaccine is reimbursable.

A list of MCPs plans that currently cover pharmacy administration of the MenACWY vaccine for adults 19 years and older for ACIP indications (see Question 2A) can be accessed at:

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/immunize/Documents/MediCalMCP.pdf>

Please note that on August 31, 2016, DHCS released an [All Plan Letter \(APL\)](#) which informed Medi-Cal managed care health plans that adult immunizations listed on the Fee for Service Contract Drug List, including MenACWY, must be added to their managed care formulary. Please check with the specific Plan to determine the current status of pharmacy reimbursement for meningococcal conjugate vaccine.

C. Covered CA

Most Health Maintenance Organizations participating in the exchange only cover the vaccine at an in-network provider under the **medical benefit**. Other plans will cover the vaccine at no cost at either an in-network pharmacy or in-network providers. Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) members may get the vaccine at an out-of-network provider, in which situation they will be charged a copay for the service. More information regarding MenACWY coverage by each of the Covered California-contracted health plans can be accessed at:

http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/immunize/Documents/CoveredCA_Table.pdf

D. Commercial Plans

To determine if the meningococcal vaccine is a pharmacy benefit, please check with commercial insurers directly by calling the company or the prescription plan specified on the member’s health insurance identification card.

E. AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP)

The meningococcal conjugate vaccine, MenACWY, is included on the [AIDS Drug Assistance Program \(ADAP\)](#) formulary. Please note however that ADAP is not able to cover the cost of the vaccine administration fee. Medi-Cal and many private insurance plans will cover the cost and administration of the meningococcal vaccine; contact the individual plan to verify coverage. Additional information regarding ADAP, including eligibility requirements, can be found at:

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/aids/Pages/tOAADAPindiv.aspx>