

Issue Brief – Vaccine Funding

HEALTH – COMMUNITY AND FAMILY HEALTH SERVICES

DOH IB 08-10

SUMMARY

The Utah's Immunization Program promotes immunization as part of comprehensive health care across the life span – infants, children, adolescent and adult. It provides services through technical assistance to local health departments (LHD), community health centers (CHC), managed care organizations (MCO), schools (public and private) and licensed day cares, and private providers. The program contracts with LHDs and CHCs to support infrastructure for outreach activities to at-risk and eligible populations. Special emphasis is placed on efforts to improve the immunization coverage for pre school-age children, especially those less than two years of age.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this funding request is to provide vaccine for underinsured children through public and private provider offices throughout the State.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The state of Utah has the youngest population in the nation. The average family size is also larger. Utah's immunization rate is below the national average. Technical assistance and promotion efforts are required to assure proper immunization. Adequate supplies of vaccine are necessary to assure proper immunizations.

The Vaccines for Children (VFC) component provides vaccine at no cost to eligible children ages 0-18 years who are uninsured, covered by Medicaid, under-insured, or American Indian. The vaccine is provided to 325 enrolled public and private medical providers statewide.

Vaccine Funding

The Immunization Program receives funding for vaccines from various sources – through federal Centers for Disease Control categorical vaccine for children funds, limited federal direct assistance 317 funds, and from the Tobacco Settlement funds allocated to Utah. Several years ago, during the budget reduction years, state vaccine funds previously funded with General Fund was switched to Tobacco Settlement funding. The current status of Tobacco Settlement funding could make this program funding unstable.

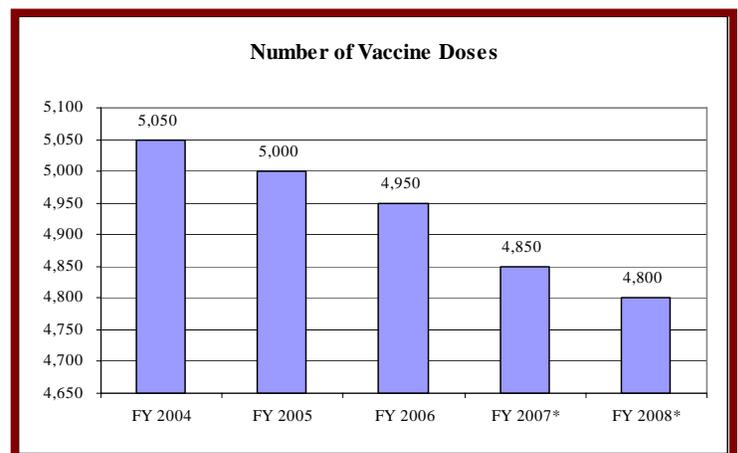
Flat funding in the immunization program reduces the number of vaccines that can be purchased each year due to inflation and increasing costs of new vaccines.

Currently, Utah spends \$995,200 state funds annually on vaccines.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Funding the request of \$500,000 ongoing General Fund could:

- Help increase access to immunizations through the lifespan of an individual state resident starting from birth;
- Increase access to immunizations for special situations, including outbreaks of vaccine preventable disease statewide; and
- Prevent vaccine shortages.



* FY 2007 and FY 2008 are projected with flat spending.