

# SHOTStracker



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If you would like more information about how you can participate in Florida SHOTS please contact

The Florida Department of Health Bureau of Immunization

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## I-TRENDS

# Gulf Coast Disasters Highlight the Importance of Immunization Registries

We've all seen the coverage of this hurricane season's massive destruction of life and property. But beyond the visible devastation, is the destruction that we cannot see. Scores of medical facilities are among the sites damaged, and tens of thousands of medical records have been destroyed. Countless patients and their families are now without access to

those records or to the shot cards required for school attendance.

The federal government and many state governments have worked together to extend periods of time by which shot records must be submitted for school and day-care enrollment (for example, granting 30-day provisional enrollments). However, the question remains: Once the provisional enrollment periods have expired, will states require children to repeat vaccinations if they are unable to verify previous immunizations with a shot record?

Many states, including Florida, have been granted access to immunization registries in the Gulf Coast. Fortunately for the children in those registries, their new health-care providers have up-to-date vaccination histories. In Louisiana alone, CDC's Immunization Registry Support Branch estimates that over 8,000 queries have been made to the Louisiana Immunization Network for Kids Statewide (LINKS) regarding vaccination histories for evacuees (as of September 14). LINKS remains functional, because a backup system, located in Baton Rouge, has been operational since Katrina struck.

The situation in the Gulf highlights the critical importance of storing immunization records in a centralized, secure database. In case of disaster or other emergency, parents may look to your office to replace shot records. Using the registry ensures that your patients' information will remain safe and accessible. Protect your patients' immunization data by entering it in Florida SHOTS.

## ALL CHILDREN DISPLACED BY HURRICANE KATRINA ELIGIBLE FOR FREE VACCINATIONS

Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Mike Leavitt announced September 16, 2005, that all children from birth to 18 years old displaced by Hurricane Katrina are eligible to receive free vaccines through the federally run Vaccines for Children program (VFC), regardless of whether they are staying at shelters, hotels, or with family and friends and regardless of previous health insurance coverage status. Managed by HHS' Centers for

### SPECIAL REPORT: FLORIDA SHOTS ACCESSES GULF COAST REGISTRIES

Florida SHOTS' help desk staff now have access to Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama state immunization registries. With this access, we are able to offer assistance, if needed, for looking up immunization records for children displaced by Hurricane Katrina.

Florida SHOTS' staff have already received and responded to hundreds of inquiries from health departments, private providers, and schools and have found many immunization records for children displaced by Hurricane Katrina. On Friday, September 30, alone staff handled records for more than 500 kids.

If you should need help in finding immunization records for affected children, please contact our Florida SHOTS help desk at 1-877-888-SHOT (7468). The help desk staff will need the following patient information:

- State of residence
- First and last names of children
- Date of birth
- Gender

The last residence address will also be helpful in identifying the correct child. These records should be treated as confidential medical information.

## I-TRENDS

# Gulf Coast Disasters Highlight the Importance of Immunization Registries

Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the VFC helps families of children who may not otherwise have access to vaccines by providing free vaccines to doctors who serve them.

CDC's immunization recommendations for children displaced by Hurricane Katrina are aimed at keeping them up-to-date on routine vaccinations and protecting them from disease outbreaks in large, crowded group settings. The nation's childhood immunization coverage rates continue at record high levels, so there is no immediate threat of vaccine-preventable disease outbreaks among these children.

HHS considers all children from birth to 18 years old who have been displaced by the effects of Hurricane Katrina to effectively be uninsured, because they are not expected to have access to medical records or proof of insurance. Taking this action allows doctors, clinics, and health

departments who provide childhood vaccinations to immunize these children using VFC vaccine.

The Vaccines for Children program is an entitlement program (a right granted by law) for eligible children, age 18 and below, known as section 1928 of the Social Security Act. VFC became operational Oct. 1, 1994. Through the VFC program, public purchased vaccine is available at no charge to enrolled public and private health care providers for eligible children. More information about the VFC program can be obtained at <http://www.cdc.gov/nip/vfc/>.

CDC's Interim Immunization Recommendations for Individuals Displaced by Hurricane Katrina can be accessed at <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/katrina/vaccrecdisplaced.asp>. Complete information on the full range of accelerated benefits available from HHS for hurricane victims is available at <http://www.hhs.gov/katrina>.

## You Said It

It's always nice to know what others who are enrolled in Florida SHOTS have to say about the program. So each issue we'll share with you what some of our top users are saying about the registry. This feature interview was conducted with Pilar Dangond, Office Manager, Alvaro Dangond, MD PA, in Miami, whose office enrolled in 2004.

### What do you think is the best feature of the registry for your office?

Everything about the program is excellent, and we use it. We are really happy with the system, and the printing of the 680 forms is very organized.

### What do you think is the best feature of the registry for your patients?

The patients really like that their shot records are printed from the computer. Using Florida SHOTS consumes less time for our staff who have to create the 680 forms—they just add the vaccines given that day, and the patient can take the form immediately.

### If another doctor's office were to call and ask you why they should enroll in the registry, what would you say?

Use the system. I don't know why all the pediatricians aren't using this system. Sometimes we have trouble getting records from another pediatrician, but it is easy to find records on Florida SHOTS. We recommend Florida SHOTS to everyone.

## Tech Tips

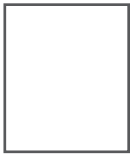
**Q:** I love being able to print 680s on our office computer.

What is the easiest way to get the blue paper for printing out the form?

**A:** Now you can order the free, preprinted, computer-compatible version of the DH Form 680 for use with Florida SHOTS directly from the Department of Health Warehouse! This means no more trips to the county health department to request the forms. To order:

1. Go online to [http://www.flshots.com/order\\_680.htm](http://www.flshots.com/order_680.htm) to print out the order form, and follow the instructions on the form.
2. Order using Stock Number 5740-099-0680-0.
3. Indicate quantity. (Forms are provided in packs of 100 or 200.)
4. Include your check for \$2.19 per package for shipping and handling.

You should receive your forms within 18 hours of your order. If you have any questions regarding the process, contact the Florida SHOTS help desk at 1-877-888-SHOT (7468).



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## Welcome Aboard!

We here at Florida SHOTS would like to wish a warm welcome to the 148 practices that enrolled during the months of August and September 2005. Recent enrollee Mary Lutes, Office Coordinator, Alliance Pediatrics in Gainesville, says this about Florida SHOTS:

"We chose to enroll in the registry because we are always looking for ways to streamline work. The burden of filling out shots forms in August is always a problem. The registry is wonderful because it allows us to print 680s and keep accurate records—for children's sakes. This is especially important because of the transient nature of families. Records aren't always complete or accurate, and in the end, parents are responsible for them. We often encounter kids entering college who need a shot record, but we don't normally keep paper records that long. Often their parents don't have the records either. The registry keeps that information so that it is always available."

"Our experience with the enrollment process, training, and the help desk have all been positive. I'm very impressed by the professional courtesy and the customer service provided by the Florida SHOTS staff. Their follow-up is remarkable. We're very busy—jammed with kids and 20 people working here. Enrolling wasn't a top priority for us until we saw the impact of the registry when it was brought to our attention. Florida SHOTS is very helpful."

"I would recommend that other offices enroll because this is a program of direct benefit to all children. Errors that aren't noticed by a human—for example, giving a second booster dose a few days too early—are noticed by Florida SHOTS. The system points out timing errors that don't readily appear in a chart."

"I totally back the registry. This is a terrific program, and enthusiasm is great among our front-office staff."

## Did You Know?

The Florida Department of Health has a medical professional volunteer registration site at <http://disasterhelp.net/medical>. DOH is responsible for the health care needs of a six-county region in Mississippi, and your expertise will help bring much needed medical aid to the people of a region devastated by Hurricane Katrina. We expect to be providing direct medical aid to the people of this region for several months. If you can assist, please visit the Web site to register.

## Top 10 Spotlight

We'd like to commend the following practices for hitting our "Top 10 by Daily Usage" chart as of September 16, 2005. Thank you for your support of the registry!

1. Alliance Pediatrics—Gainesville
2. Pediatric Professional Associates—Miami
3. Pediatric Associates of Lakeland
4. Diagnostic Clinic—Clearwater
5. Carithers Pediatric Group, PP—Jacksonville
6. Westchester Pediatric—Miami
7. Dr. Yahia A. Rahim—Panama City
8. Lake Pediatrics, Mt. Dora
9. Central Florida Pediatrics, Lake Mary
10. David Weiss, MD, PA—Jacksonville

- YES, please contact me to schedule a visit with a regional coordinator to enroll in Florida SHOTS.
- Sign me up for electronic copies of *SHOTS Tracker*.

EMAIL 1: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL 2: \_\_\_\_\_

CONTACT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

OFFICE NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_

COUNTY: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

NL:V1:19

## How Do I Enroll in Florida SHOTS?

### SIGN UP TODAY!

Fill out this information card and mail it back to us. Please include proper postage.

Call **(877) 888-SHOT**, or send an email to the help desk at **flshots@doh.state.fl.us** if you need more information.

So many enrollment options... and they're all FREE!



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NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE:

## Easy Enrollment Form

[www.flshots.com/Providers.html](http://www.flshots.com/Providers.html)

## Florida SHOTS Enrollment: Fast. Easy. Free.

Florida SHOTS (State Health Online Tracking System) is a free, statewide, centralized electronic immunization registry that helps health care providers and parents keep track of immunization records. Enroll today at <http://www.flshots.com>.

## E-Tracker

To receive this newsletter via email as well as regular mail, please fill out and return the tear-off card included in this newsletter. Include as many email addresses as you would like to receive the newsletter.

