

No. F. 4-12/2014-CHE
Government of Pakistan
Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination

Islamabad, 31st May, 2014

Subject: STANDARDIZATION OF PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF
POLIO RELATED TRAVEL REGULATIONS

Reference is made to this Ministry's letter No. 25-11/Secy/PEI/NHSRC/2014 dated 9th May, 2014.

Your kind attention is drawn to the critical need to standardize the implementation of Polio-related travel regulations across the country in view of the grave risk to the country's reputation and image internationally posed by inconsistent and lax implementation of the travel recommendations. It is requested that the following procedures and practices be adopted duly observing the internationally acceptable standards;

1. DESIGNATED CENTRES:

- i. Only the Government health facilities duly notified by the respective provincial and area health departments are authorized to issue the Polio vaccination certificates. No private sector hospital / health facility / medical practitioner shall be allowed to administer vaccine to the travelers or issue certificates in this respect.
- ii. An officer no less than BS-19 shall be authorized to sign and issue vaccination certificates at the designated centre after ensuring the administration of prescribed vaccine dosage.
- iii. A signboard mentioning direction of the Polio Vaccination Center and necessary instructions for the travelers shall be clearly displayed at main entrance of the hospital.
- iv. The vaccination center shall be established at an easily accessible, prominent and spacious location within the health facility. An appropriate waiting area be designated to facilitate the visitors.
- v. The designated centers in health facilities shall remain open from 9.00 am till 5.00 pm. The vaccination counters at all exit points including airports, sea ports and land crossings shall remain open 24 hours.
- vi. All intending international travellers who present themselves at the designated vaccination centers shall be administered polio vaccine. To facilitate and encourage vaccination, intending travellers shall only be required to provide their Passport number. No document including original or photocopy of Passport or ticket shall be required for vaccination.

- vii. No intending traveler who presents himself for vaccination at the designated centre and provides his Passport number shall be denied vaccination on any grounds.
- viii. All travellers to Pakistan who stay in the country for more than four weeks shall be required to take polio vaccination at the designated centers and obtain a certificate of vaccination. No vaccine certificate shall be demanded from such travellers by the authority upon their departure at exit points (airports, seaports and land crossings) if their stay is less than four weeks.

2. COUNTERS AT EXIT POINTS (Airports, Seaports etc)

- i. Vaccination Counters shall be established in the Departure Hall of all airports, seaports and land crossings. Clearly visible Signboard shall be displayed for facilitation of travelers.
- ii. A signboard shall be displayed at the arrival area in all airports, seaports and land crossings clearly stating that *'any traveler intending to stay in Pakistan beyond four weeks is mandatorily required to be vaccinated against Polio'*

3. FOREIGNERS AND EXPATRIATE PAKISTANIS

- i. WHO International Certificate of Vaccination acquired by foreigners and expatriate Pakistanis travelling to Pakistan from country of origin will be considered valid vis a vis Polio related travel regulations by the authority concerned at the exit point upon their departure from Pakistan

4. ADMINISTRATION OF VACCINE:

- i. Vaccine shall be administered to all international travellers preferably 4 weeks prior to travel at designated health centers i.e. Tertiary-care hospitals, EDO Health Offices etc. The facilities for vaccination and issuance of certificate of vaccination shall be made available at all airports, seaports and land crossings.
- ii. The intending international travelers shall be administered Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV) irrespective of age and sex including pregnant ladies or previous immunization status.
- iii. For immuno-compromised persons OPV may not be given. IPV may be given in such cases unless otherwise advised by the Physician. Reasons for not administering vaccine must be recorded on the certificate.
- iv. At the time of administering vaccine, the following shall be ensured;
 - a. Valid expiry date – *The designated BS 19 officer shall check the expiry date on each vial of vaccine and ensure validity of the vaccine.*
 - b. Effective cold chain maintenance – *Vaccine shall be properly stored in a refrigerator at 2-8 degrees Centigrade (35 to 40 degrees Fahrenheit). Vaccine Vial Monitor shall be checked carefully and in*

the event of any indication that cold chain has not been maintained, the vial shall be immediately discarded.

- c. Correct dosage- Only two drops shall be administration to each traveler in case of OPV whereas one injection with 0.5 ml dosage shall be administered in case of IPV.


- v. Types of Vaccine

- a. Both Oral Polio Vaccine and Inactivated Polio Vaccine shall be considered valid for administration to travellers.

5. VACCINATION CERTIFICATE

- i. Only standard international vaccination card / certificate (yellow colour) provided by the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination shall be issued to certify the administration of vaccine. Vaccination certificates issued earlier (white color) shall also be considered valid and accepted at all exit points (airports, seaports and land crossings)
- ii. The certificate issued at the designated centre shall have serial number prominently displayed on the top of the certificate. Record of the patient, Passport number, batch of vaccine administered, expiry and validity of the certificate shall be duly maintained in a register at the centre for audit / verification as required.
- iii. A certificate of vaccination shall remain valid for a period of one year from the date of issuance.
- iv. As the issuance of fake vaccination certificates could have serious national and international repercussions, a fool-proof mechanism be devised to avoid the issuance of cards without administration of Polio vaccine.
- v. Issuance / identification of such type of fake vaccine certificates, if any, must be immediately inquired in to for strict action.
- vi. The vaccination certificates shall be issued free of cost. No charges under any circumstances shall be levied by any individual or authority the service.

6. ACCOUNTABILITY

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- i. It shall be ensured that no fake, forged or bogus certificates of vaccination are issued. No Vaccination certificate shall be issued without administration of vaccine at the designated vaccination centers. Individuals responsible for such acts of commission or omission shall be proceeded against under the law.
 - ii. Strict action shall be taken against anyone found charging any traveler for issuance of the Certificate of vaccination.

7. PUBLIC INFORMATION CAMPAIGN

- i. Television and Radio Announcements shall be arranged for information of the travellers.

- ii. Posters shall be displayed at vantage locations outside the departure area for information of the travellers.
- iii. Information Leaflets shall be provided to travel agencies to facilitate intending international travellers and ensure that they seek vaccination from designated centers well ahead of planned travel to avoid inconvenience resulting from pressure on the exit point vaccination counters.

8. MONITORING & CHECKING AT POINTS OF EXIT

- i. An appropriate officer of BS-19 and above should be assigned to monitor the above arrangements periodically as well as through surprise checks.
- ii. Officials of the Directorate of Central Health Establishment, Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination will check and verify certificates of vaccination prior to immigration in the departure Hall.

It may be emphasized that Pakistan will need to show tangible and reliable results in terms of strict implementation of Polio-related travel regulations to avoid being penalized by even more stiffer measures and face a possible travel ban. It is therefore requested that the travel regulations may be strictly implemented in letter and spirit in line with the above-mentioned SoPs.


(Rashida Malik)
Secretary

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