



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ODH Issues Measles Outbreak Guidance to Ohio Hospitals

COLUMBUS – As local health jurisdictions continue their tireless efforts to prevent and control the spread of measles, the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has provided updated guidance for hospitals to prevent the transmission of measles in healthcare settings. The guidance addresses what hospitals should do to ensure that their healthcare personnel demonstrate presumptive evidence of immunity to measles, and how hospitals should follow the appropriate infection control precautions when caring for patients suspected to have measles.

Ohio's measles outbreak is the largest in the U.S. since 1994.

“To prevent disease and transmission in healthcare settings, healthcare institutions should ensure that all persons who work in healthcare facilities have presumptive evidence of immunity to measles,” said ODH State Epidemiologist Dr. Mary DiOrio. “Healthcare personnel might include physicians, nurses, nursing assistants, therapists, technicians, emergency medical service personnel, students and trainees, pharmacists and persons not directly involved in patient care but potentially exposed to infectious agents.”

Evidence of immunity to measles includes written documentation of vaccination with two doses of the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine, laboratory evidence of immunity, laboratory confirmation of having had measles previously, or birth before 1957 since most born earlier are immune due to past exposure to measles.

ODH continues to encourage individuals to make sure that they are up-to-date on their immunizations, including the MMR vaccine. When individuals are fully vaccinated, the MMR vaccine is 97% effective in preventing measles.

ODH also continues to advise parents that contracting measles is especially serious for infants younger than one year of age. “Parents with infants too young to be vaccinated should consider not traveling with them to areas where measles outbreaks are occurring,” Dr. DiOrio said.

ODH and its local public health partners support the vaccine recommendations set forth by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices and CDC. These recommendations include vaccination schedules for when both children and adults should receive their vaccinations.

For more information about measles, visit the ODH website at <http://www.odh.ohio.gov/>.

Chronology

- June 18: ODH sends out guidance about measles vaccination to all healthcare personnel
- June 13: Crawford County Health Department contacts ODH about one confirmed case of measles
- June 10: ODH holds a statewide update call for media about the situation of the outbreak
- June 10: Stark County Health Department contacts ODH about six confirmed cases of measles
- June 9: ODH goes into a Incident Command Structure
- June 9: Governor Kasich signs an executive order allowing licensed pharmacists to administer the MMR vaccine to individuals 18 years and older
- June 7: Highland County Health Department contacts ODH about a suspected measles case
- June 6: ODH sends out a press release about summertime travel and staying healthy
- May 27: More than 13,000 doses of MMR vaccine have been distributed to local health departments to date to combat the measles outbreak. Local health jurisdictions have administered 8,240 doses (62 percent) of these doses thus far
- May 23: Number of measles cases surpasses 150 in a six-county area
- May 13: ODH conducts a conference call with media across the state and local health jurisdictions regarding measles outbreak
- May 8: ODH Bureau of Infectious Diseases staff members begin to provide periodic on-site assistance to affected local health jurisdictions
- May 3: ODH develops measles guidance for school nurses in collaboration with CDC and distributes it to school nurses, Head Start Programs and local health jurisdictions
- May 2: ODH issues measles guidance to Ohio schools
- May 1: ODH establishes a measles homepage on its website containing an overview of the measles outbreak, links to the local health jurisdiction in each affected county, and a list of Frequently Asked Questions about measles
- May 1: ODH issues measles guidance to healthcare providers
- April 25: ODH orders MMR vaccines for delivery to all counties that plan to hold vaccination clinics
- April 25: CDC officially confirms Ohio's measles cases
- April 24: ODH, the Ashland County-City Health Department, the Knox County Health Department and the Holmes County General Health District issue a joint press release with the dates/times/locations of MMR vaccine clinics
- April 24: ODH and its public health partners begin regular conference calls with CDC regarding the measles outbreak
- April 24: ODH, Knox County Health Department and Holmes County General Health District issue a combined press release regarding the suspected measles outbreak
- April 23: ODH alerts Ohio hospitals about the suspected measles cases
- April 23: ODH is alerted about a possible measles outbreak in three Ohio counties

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