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February 5, 2015

Dear County and District Superintendents:

California is experiencing a large measles outbreak that was triggered by an exposure of measles at the Disneyland Parks in December 2014. As of February 4, 2015, 21 Los Angeles County residents have been infected and it is likely that more measles cases will occur among people who have had contact with persons in the initial wave of infection. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health has been pleased to have the support of schools in responding to the measles outbreak and would appreciate if you would encourage your district's schools to take the additional steps outlined below to help curb the spread of measles.

Impact of Measles on Students and Schools

Measles can lead to serious illness and death, and even mild cases will result in missed school days for students, teachers, and staff. It can spread easily. Most unvaccinated persons who have had contact with someone with measles will be infected. Because the measles virus can live in the air and on surfaces for hours, a person can also be infected by being in a room that an infected person was in or by touching an object that they've touched. Thus, one case in a school can easily turn into many.

Measles Vaccination Recommendations and Requirements

Two doses of the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine are approximately 99% effective in preventing measles. MMR vaccines are routinely recommended for children at 12-15 months of age and 4-6 years of age. All adolescents and adults born after 1956 who haven't been vaccinated should also be vaccinated.

Two doses of MMR vaccine given on or after the first birthday are required for students entering kindergarten and transfer students entering the 7th grade. One dose of MMR vaccine is required for students transferring into all other grade levels (California Health and Safety Code, Division 105, Part 2, Chapter 1, Sections 120325-120380).

Recommended Activities for Schools

School nurses, teachers, staff, parents and students play an important role in preventing measles. Please encourage your schools to implement the following activities and to share strategies, resources, and ideas with other schools in the district.

- **Use existing communication channels to encourage vaccination of students.** Schools can use marquee messages, robo-calls, newsletters, educational materials, social media postings, and letters to raise awareness among parents and students. A customizable parent letter is attached for your use and measles educational materials are posted at: <http://eziz.org/resources/measles/> and <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/measles/index.htm>.

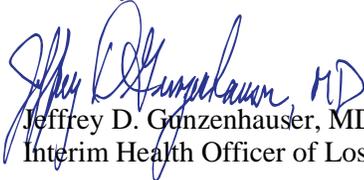
- **Provide presentations regarding measles to parents, teachers and staff.** Ask your school nurses to make a presentation or answer questions at parent and staff meetings. Presentations will also be provided for audiences of 20 or over, by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, as staffing and scheduling permit. Visit <http://www.ph.lacounty.gov/hea/speakers.htm> to request a presentation.
- **Follow-up with students who are missing required vaccine doses.** Encourage vaccination by following-up with conditionally entered students who are not fully vaccinated against measles and other vaccine-preventable diseases. Information regarding school immunization requirements is posted at www.shotsforschool.org.
- **Refer students for vaccination.** Please encourage parents to consult their child's regular health care provider about all recommended vaccines. Families who do not have a regular health care provider or health insurance that covers vaccines can visit <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip/IZclinics/clinics.htm> or call the Los Angeles County Information Line at 2-1-1 for referrals to providers offering vaccines at no-cost or a reduced cost.
- **Report all suspected measles cases to the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Immunization Program.** Please be alert for students of staff who have symptoms of measles, which include a high fever, cough, runny nose, red and watery eyes, and a rash that starts on the face and spreads to the rest of the body. If students present with these symptoms, encourage their parents to contact their regular health care provider as soon as possible. Also, please report any measles cases at your school immediately to the Immunization Program at (213) 351-7800. The Immunization Program will provide guidance regarding infection control and school exclusions for infected and unvaccinated students.
- **Encourage teachers and staff to be vaccinated.** All adults born after 1956 who do not have documented proof of vaccination or immunity from measles should be vaccinated. Measles vaccinations are covered by most insurance plans. School administrators can refer teachers and staff to their regular provider for vaccination.

Additional information regarding measles, including updates regarding the measles outbreak, and FAQs for parents and schools are posted at: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/measles/index.htm>,

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/Measles.aspx> and <http://www.cdc.gov/measles/>.

Thank you again for your school district's support. We appreciate your efforts to protect students, teachers, staff, and our community from measles and other vaccine-preventable diseases.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey D. Gunzenhauser, MD, MPH
Interim Health Officer of Los Angeles County

Attachment