May 3, 2019

Dear County and District Superintendents:

Los Angeles County has recently identified several cases of measles and over two thousand other persons exposed to these cases. Measles is a highly contagious viral infection that spreads very easily in people who have never had measles or measles immunization. We expect that there is now more measles virus in circulation in the county and we are asking for your assistance.

We are particularly concerned about how measles could impact your schools given the possibility of rapid disease transmission in your setting among unimmunized or under-immunized staff, students, or visitors. We would appreciate if you would encourage your district’s schools to take the additional steps outlined below to help curb the spread of measles among your students, staff, and community.

**Impact of Measles on Students and Schools**

Measles is highly contagious and can lead to serious illness and death; even mild cases will result in missed school days for students, teachers, and staff. Most people who have not been immunized against measles will get measles if they have contact with the virus. A person with measles can spread the disease to others even before they have any symptoms. 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 an infected person has touched. Thus, one case in a school can easily turn into many.

In addition, there are specific groups who either attend, visit, or work at your schools that may not be able to be immunized and may be particularly vulnerable to severe measles complications including pregnant women, children under 12 months of age, and persons who are immunocompromised.

Be aware that if there is a measles exposure at a school, all exposed persons (students and staff) without records of 2 doses of MMR will be excluded from school and work for 21 days after exposure to the measles case or until a blood test confirms they are immune.

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH) Recommendations:

**Make sure staff and students are immunized**

- **Remind all school staff to confirm they are immune to measles.** All staff at schools (pre-kindergarten through post-high school educational institutions) are at increased risk for acquiring and transmitting measles. For this reason, we recommend that school staff have either 2 documented doses of the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) immunization or serologic demonstration of immunity.
Please ask your employees to review their measles immunization records with their health care providers to make sure that they are adequately protected. Measles immunizations are available at healthcare providers or at local pharmacies and are covered by most insurance plans. Public Health clinics offer no or low-cost immunizations for staff who are uninsured or underinsured. They can call 2-1-1 or visit www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip to find a nearby clinic.

- **Proactively encourage 2 doses of measles immunization of all students.** 2 doses of MMR immunization are recommended for all school aged children and should be encouraged now to prevent new local measles outbreaks. Effective July 1, 2019, proof of 2 MMR doses will be required at admission or transfer for TK/K-12 students.

Please follow-up with conditionally entered students who are not fully vaccinated against measles and consider sending reminder of the 2-dose requirement for fall entry now [a customizable template letter for parents is included].

Information regarding school immunization requirements is posted at www.shotsforschool.org

**Follow these tips to keep your school healthy**

- **Ask staff to know the signs of measles.** Teachers and school personnel should know the symptoms of measles to identify possible cases and take action when students and staff may be ill. Measles symptoms include a fever, cough, runny nose, red and watery eyes, and a rash that starts on the face or hairline and spreads to the rest of the body.

- **Ask students and staff to stay home when they’re sick.** This along with covering coughs and sneezes with a sleeve or tissue, washing hands often with soap and water, and not touching your eyes, nose, or mouth, help stop people from getting and spreading respiratory diseases.

- **Review and share measles FAQs including** Addressing Schools Concerns about Measles, Addressing Concerns about Measles Vaccination (for parents), and a general measles FAQ. All are available at on the measles homepage (www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/measles) in the section “More Information on Measles” under “Measles FAQs in multiple languages”.

- **Display posters to educate staff, students, and parents about symptoms of measles.** DPH has posters to download including, “Think Measles Poster for Patients” and “Consider Measles Poster for Clinicians” that can be found on the measles homepage (www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/measles) in the “Information for Health Care Providers” section.

**Be prepared in case a measles case is suspected or confirmed at your school**

1. **Immediately isolate the person with symptoms of measles.** They should be masked (if possible) and put in a room with the door closed. If this is a student, the staff person who stays with them must be immune to measles (documentation 2 doses of MMR or proof of serologic immunity).

2. **Report any suspected measles cases at your school immediately.** Call DPH to report the case immediately: weekdays 8:30 AM – 5 PM: call 888-397-3993. After-hours: call (213) 974-1234 and ask for the physician on call. DPH will assist with the next steps.

3. **Quickly develop, and submit to DPH, a line list of individuals, including students, visitors, staff, and parents who were present at your school and potentially exposed to measles.** Measles exposure would be all persons who shared air space with the case or who were in the airspace within two hours after the case’s departure. We request that you provide the list within one working day. DPH will need this list to immediately start its contact investigation and identify
those exposed and at risk of developing and transmitting measles to others after a measles exposure.

4. **Review your list of students with Medical Exemptions and Personal Beliefs Exemptions** to see who is at risk of developing or transmitting the disease and may require exclusion from school until the completion of the incubation period.

Additional information regarding measles, including updates regarding the measles outbreak, and FAQs are posted at: [www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/measles](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/measles).

Please contact the DPH Vaccine Preventable Disease Control Program at (213) 351-7800 if you have any questions. We appreciate your commitment and dedication to keeping Los Angeles County healthy.

Regards,

Muntu Davis, M.D., M.P.H.
County Health Officer