May 10, 2019

RE: PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF MEASLES

Dear Honorable Officials and City Managers:

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH) has recently identified several cases of measles and thousands of exposures. 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 circulating in the county and we are asking for your assistance.

Impact of Measles on Cities

We are particularly concerned about how measles could impact your jurisdictions given the possibility of rapid disease transmission in public settings among unimmunized or under-immunized staff, visitors, residents, students, and others. Settings of particular concern include:

- Public venues where large gatherings occur, such as city halls, public libraries, large stores, and event venues;
- Congregate living facilities, homeless shelters, colleges/universities, and schools; and
- Occupational or other community settings where services are provided to large groups of people or to individuals who are risk of complications from measles (infants, pregnant women, and immune compromised individuals).

About Measles

Measles is highly contagious and can lead to serious illness and death. Even mild cases may result in missed work days for staff. Most people who have not been immunized against or who have not previously had measles will get it 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 public locations like city hall, public libraries, community centers, other public buildings, event venues, schools, colleges/universities, or large stores can easily turn into many, if the people exposed are not already protected against measles.
If someone is not already protected, the best way to keep from getting and spreading measles is to get the measles-mumps-rubella immunization (MMR). The MMR immunization is very effective at preventing measles: 93% effective with one dose and 97% effective with two doses. In addition, there are specific groups who either attend, visit, or work for your city/jurisdiction that may not able to be immunized and may be particularly vulnerable to severe measles complications such as pregnant women, infants, and some people with weakened immune systems. They rely on high rates of immunization among the rest of us for protection.

Los Angeles County DPH Response Actions

In response to the measles cases that have occurred in Los Angeles County, DPH has mounted effective public health strategies to raise awareness and to prevent the spread of this disease, including

1. Identifying contacts (people who were exposed and at risk of developing the disease) and protecting them with active or passive immunization when possible, as well as limiting their activities (exclusion or quarantine) when necessary to prevent possible spread to others;
2. Isolating people who are infectious to prevent the spread of measles to others;
3. Strongly advising non-immune individuals, who can, to receive the measles immunization; and
4. Notifying the public through postings and local media of specific public locations where measles cases have occurred

Los Angeles County DPH Recommendations

Immunize

- Remind all city personnel to confirm they are immune to measles.

You know you are protected from measles if you are immunized or you have a blood test verifying that you are immune. Two doses of the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) immunization are recommended for all school-aged children (and required for school entry) and for adults at increased risk of measles. At least one dose of the MMR immunization is recommended for all other adults.

All personnel or volunteers who work with children (infants through post-high school) are at increased risk for acquiring and transmitting measles. For this reason, we recommend that these personnel have either provide documentation that they have received 2 doses of the MMR immunization or a blood test that demonstrates immunity. Healthcare workers and those who travel internationally should also be immunized with 2 doses.

Please ask your employees to make sure that they have documentation showing they are adequately protected. They may already have documentation of their immunizations or a past measles infection. If needed, they should consult with their health care provider.

Measles immunizations are available from healthcare providers or ate local pharmacies and are covered by most insurance plans. Public Health clinics offer no- or low-cost immunizations for persons who are uninsured or underinsured. Members of your staff can call 2-1-1 or visit www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip to find a nearby clinic.

Follow these tips to keep your city aware and healthy

- Promote awareness that measles is present in LA County and ask your employees to know the symptoms of illness. 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.
- We would also like to request your support in spreading the word about measles, its symptoms and preventive actions to increase awareness among Los Angeles County residents.
• **Review and share measles FAQs.** Measles FAQs are available in multiple languages on DPH’s measles homepage ([www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/measles](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/measles)) in the section “More Information on Measles” under “Measles FAQs in multiple languages.”

• **Display posters to educate staff, volunteers, and visitors about symptoms of measles.** DPH has materials and posters to download including Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and “Think Measles” poster in multiple languages that can be found in the “Measles Toolkit” on the measles homepage ([www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/measles](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/measles)).

• We also have updated information and measles toolkit materials available for sharing through social media, websites, newsletters, and offices on our website at [http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/measles](http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/measles) and on social media platforms: Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. We have a PSA Informational Video (1 min) available in English and Spanish that may be of particular interest for sharing.

**What to do if a measles exposure is confirmed to have occurred in a city facility**

If you or someone you know has symptoms of measles, they should go home and call their provider by phone right away before going in. The diagnosis of measles can only be confirmed by a lab test.

If DPH receives confirmation that a person suspected or confirmed to have measles was at one of your city facilities during the time in which they could have infected others, DPH will notify the facility and, ultimately, the public. DPH will ask for the following to be done by the facility:

1. **Quickly develop, and submit to DPH, a line list of individuals, including staff, volunteers, contractors, and visitors who were present during the specified exposure period.**
   Potentially exposed persons would include all who shared air space with the ill individual or who were in the air space within two hours after the individual’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 to identify and provide direction to those at risk of developing and transmitting measles to others.

2. **Develop a list with documentation of the measles immunization/immune status of all staff, if possible.** It is strongly recommended that this action be taken now, before a measles exposure occurs, especially for all staff persons whose work involves direct contact with the public. DPH will require and review documentation of the doses of live measles containing immunization or laboratory evidence of immunity (measles IgG positive) in order to clear staff to continue working in a public exposure site. Those who cannot provide satisfactory documentation to DPH may be excluded or quarantined from work until either their immunity can be established or until they no longer present a substantial risk of developing measles and transmitting it to others, which could be for up to 21 days after their last exposure.

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 let me know if you have any questions. We appreciate your commitment and dedication to keeping Los Angeles County healthy.

With best regards,

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