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## MEASLES ALERT- FIRST CASE IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY THIS YEAR

On March 22, a case of confirmed measles was reported in Los Angeles County for the first time this year. The case is a home-schooled child who had not been vaccinated against measles. A second unrelated suspect is currently being investigated to rule out measles.

Measles is a highly communicable disease that can have serious complications, but it can be prevented through vaccination. A cluster of measles cases in Northern California this year and cases in other parts of the world highlight the ongoing risk of measles infection for unvaccinated persons. Measles vaccination is routinely recommended for all children, **even when home-schooled**, and it is required for children attending any public or private school in California. Adolescents, adults, and especially persons such as health care workers who are at risk of exposing high-risk persons to measles, are urged to be vaccinated against measles if they don't have proof of measles immunity (record of previous vaccination or positive measles serological test results).

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health depends on healthcare providers to identify suspected measles cases and report them in a timely manner.

- **Consider measles when evaluating any patient who has an acute rash illness with fever, especially in someone returning from international travel or who has had contact with international visitors.** Symptoms usually begin 10-12 days (up to 18 days) after exposure with a prodrome of fever as high as 105°F (40.5°C), malaise, cough, runny nose, and conjunctivitis. Two to four days following the onset of the prodrome, a maculopapular rash develops. The rash usually begins around the ears and hairline and then spreads down to cover the face, trunk, arms, and legs.
- **IMMEDIATELY report any suspect cases in Los Angeles County to the Morbidity Central Reporting Unit at 888-397-3993 (phone) or 888-397-3778 (fax).** Do NOT wait for laboratory confirmation before reporting a suspect case. During non-business hours (before 7:30 am, after 5:00 pm, or weekends) call 213-974-1234. For cases among residents of the Cities of Long Beach or Pasadena, contact their respective health departments.
- **Obtain blood specimens for serologic confirmation of the diagnosis.** Blood specimens should be obtained at the time of clinical presentation and be tested for both measles IgM and IgG antibodies. Additionally, specimens for measles virus culture should be collected and transported in a tube of viral transport media. If within 4 days of rash onset, collect both a nasopharyngeal swab and a urine specimen. If within 5-7 days of rash onset, collect urine specimen only.
- **Respiratory and airborne precautions should be taken to prevent transmission.** Suspect measles cases needing medical attention should not be allowed in patient waiting areas. They should be masked and placed immediately in an examination room, with the door closed. The examination room in which a patient with suspected or confirmed measles was examined should not be used again for two hours. With hospitalized patients, respiratory isolation is recommended for 4 days after the onset of rash. Listings of all exposed patients and staff will be required by the public health department from any medical facility treating a case of measles.

For technical assistance or additional information about measles, please call the Los Angeles County Immunization Program's Surveillance Unit at (213) 351-7800.