

GEORGE LATIMER, Westchester County Executive

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WESTCHESTER COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT OFFERS MORE FREE MEASLES VACCINES

County Health Commissioner Urges Vaccination for Camp Counselors, Staff and Unvaccinated Residents

(White Plains, NY) – With the largest measles outbreak in the U.S. underway since 2000, Health Commissioner Sherlita Amler, MD, urged unvaccinated children who will be attending summer camp, along with camp counselors, staff and Westchester residents to register for a free MMR vaccine clinic, offered by the Westchester County Department of Health.

The MMR vaccine protects against measles, mumps and rubella, and is both very safe and effective.

To reserve a spot to get a free MMR vaccine, go to <http://www.health.ny.gov/gotoclinic/60>. The MMR vaccination clinics are as follows:

- Tuesday, April 30, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., 134 Court Street, White Plains
- Tuesday, May 14, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., 134 Court Street, White Plains

In addition to attending one of the Health Department’s vaccination clinics, the MMR vaccine is available through private healthcare providers and is covered by most insurers. Residents should call their health care provider as soon as possible to make arrangements to be vaccinated.

Amler said: “While I strongly encourage everyone to get fully vaccinated, I especially want to appeal to anyone working or attending a camp this summer to do so. Lack of immunity can keep kids home from camp and camp staff home from work for 21 days if exposed to measles. Measles is highly contagious. People can spread measles before they even know they are sick. People without immunity can catch measles just by being in a room for up to two hours after a person with measles has left. Without immunity, nine out of 10 people who are exposed will become infected. If exposed and not immune, campers will miss out on summer fun while being isolated at home for three weeks.”

Measles is a highly contagious virus that causes fever, rash, cough, runny nose and red, watery eyes. Measles spreads from person to person by coughing or sneezing. Tiny white spots may appear in the mouth and a rash

may appear on the body two to four days after symptoms begin. Without knowing they are sick, an infected person can spread measles to others up to four days before the rash appears, and for up to four days afterwards.

Complications from measles are common and can include hearing loss, pneumonia, swelling of the brain and death. About one in four people who get measles will be hospitalized. Those who get measles are also at risk for Subacute sclerosing panencephalitis (SSPE), a very rare, but fatal disease of the central nervous system that results from a measles virus infection acquired earlier in life. SSPE generally develops 7 to 10 years after a person has measles, even though the person seems to have fully recovered from the illness. Measles can also be more severe in young infants, pregnant women and people with a weak immune system. Anyone who believes they may have been exposed should contact their healthcare provider.

The Health Department vaccinated 92 people at three MMR clinics held earlier in April. The County Health Department arranged these clinics, after publicly urging timely MMR vaccination, after eight unvaccinated children in northern Westchester were diagnosed with measles. The children do not attend public schools or daycare programs.

Dr. Amler cautioned anyone who thinks they have measles to call their doctor and report their symptoms. They should not go to a health care facility unannounced, to avoid spreading measles to others.

For more information, call the NYS Measles Hotline at 1-888-364-4837.

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About Westchester County

Westchester County, located in the heart of the historic Hudson Valley, covers 500 square miles and has a population of just under a million. Originally home to Native Americans, who were members of the Lenape tribe, it is today a rich mix of many cultures and landscapes. The County is a blend of bustling cities, quaint villages and picturesque towns as well as open spaces and a network of beautiful parks. Westchester is made up of 6 cities, 19 towns and 20 villages. Westchester County is known for top-notch public schools, and a high quality of life. The County is also an intellectual capital, boasting a highly educated workforce, competitive colleges and universities, Fortune 500 companies, world changing non-profits, and cutting-edge research centers. Westchester is led by County Executive George Latimer, who took office in January 2018 as the ninth County Executive. Using inclusion and openness as a foreground, Latimer is fighting to make Westchester a destination for all people to live, work and enjoy. Learn more about Westchester County by visiting www.westchestergov.com

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