

George Latimer
County Executive

Sherlita Amler, M.D.
Commissioner of Health

ATTENTION

Updated Public Health Alert

TO: PHYSICIANS

DATE: April 11, 2019 5:30 PM

SUBJECT: **MEASLES CONFIRMED IN EIGHT UNVACCINATED WESTCHESTER COUNTY CHILDREN
HEALTH DEPARTMENT OFFERING FREE VACCINATION CLINICS**

Measles has been confirmed in eight unvaccinated children from northern Westchester. The children range in age from 6 months to 14 years old. Two of the infected children developed pneumonia and had to be hospitalized as a result. While none of the infected children attend public schools or childcare programs, the Health Department is still in the process of gathering the information necessary to identify any locations where these children may have exposed others.

As our partner in protecting the public's health, we need your assistance in educating your patients about the dangers of measles and the benefits of vaccination. The Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine is safe and highly effective in preventing measles cases and containing outbreaks.

The Health Department will be offering Free MMR vaccinations at special clinics on the following dates and times:

- **April 12, Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., 134 Court Street in White Plains**
- **April 13, Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., 134 Court Street in White Plains**
- **April 16, Tuesday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., 25 Moore Avenue in Mount Kisco**

Anyone who would like to receive a vaccine at one of these clinics should register in advance for an appointment at www.health.ny.gov/gotoclinic/60 or call 914-995-5800

I urge you to talk with your patients about the importance of being fully vaccinated against measles. Those who are unsure of their status should work with your office or the last school that they attended to obtain their vaccination records. If a patient is unable to locate his or her records, they should be instructed to get the MMR vaccine, as it is not harmful to receive additional doses. Individuals are considered protected or immune to measles if they were born before 1957, have received two doses of measles-containing vaccine, or have had a lab test confirming immunity. While a serology can verify immunity, the Health Department will not be offering this service for the general population.

All healthcare providers should:

- **Offer MMR vaccine at the earliest opportunity to all eligible patients 12 months and older who have no evidence of measles immunity as defined below, and**
- **Offer a second dose to anyone 4 years and older without contraindications who has one MMR.**

Additionally, for any children who will be traveling internationally or who live in communities affected by measles, healthcare providers should:

- Offer a second dose of MMR vaccine to eligible patients ages 1-3 years without contraindications who have previously received one dose. The second dose must be a minimum of 28 days after the first dose, and
- Offer a dose of MMR vaccine to all infants 6-11 months of age without contraindications. This dose will not count toward the routine 2-dose schedule. The child will need to be revaccinated at 12-15 months of age and again at 4-6 years of age for a total of 3 dose.
- Report all doses of MMR vaccine, both historical doses and those recently administered to patients, particularly children being excluded from school due to lack of measles immunity, to the New York State Immunization Information System (NYSIIS).

Measles is highly contagious, and nine out of 10 people who are not immune and are exposed to measles will become infected. 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. Measles can be a serious infection that results in pneumonia, swelling of the brain, hearing loss and death.

Measles symptoms start with a fever, coryza, cough, conjunctivitis, and sore throat. It's followed by a rash that usually appears two to four days after the fever begins and lasts five to six days. The rash begins at the hairline, moves to the face and neck, down the body and then to the arms and legs. Measles is easily spread from person to person by coughing or sneezing and infection can be more severe in young infants, pregnant women and people with a weak immune system. People are at risk for getting sick up to 21 days after being exposed.

Anyone who has signs or symptoms of measles should not show up at a health care facility unannounced. Please alert your patients that should they develop symptoms of measles, they must contact you or the health care facility that they are planning to go to in advance so that arrangements can be made for them to be seen without placing others at risk for exposure.

If you have a patient that you suspect has measles, please call the Westchester County Department of Health at 914-813-5159 during regular business hours and after hours at 914-813-5000. You can also find the latest information about measles on the physicians section of our website at www.westchestergov.com/health.

Sincerely,



Sherlita Amler, M.D.
Commissioner of Health