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Public Health Notice

July 18, 2019

Dear Superintendent,

After 25 years of no measles cases in El Paso County, measles has been reported in El Paso this summer. To date, we have identified four cases of measles in three children and one adult. We are fortunate, that as a community, we have very high immunization rates against measles which reduces the quick spread of this highly contagious and dangerous disease. However, though our immunization rates are very good, this is no time for complacency.

We are requesting that you be extra vigilant in the review of your students' immunization records, particularly as relates to measles. The state of Texas allows schools to "provisionally" enroll students who have received at least one dose of the measles vaccine. For the remainder of 2019, we are recommending that provisional enrollment for partially vaccinated students be suspended and that the schools require all students to have completed the two dose series for measles upon school entry.

We further recommend that you carefully review Texas Administrative Code, Title 24, Part 1, Chapter 97, Subchapter A, Rule 97.7 – Diseases Requiring Exclusion from Schools – particularly the section regarding measles. In general, school administrators are to exclude students who meet the defined criteria, while physicians or health authorities determine and authorize readmissions after the student is deemed non-infectious.

Lastly, we ask your help in getting the message out to your district's families to not delay getting students vaccinated until school begins. The earlier students are vaccinated, the better their immunity to measles, the lower the risk of spread, and the lower the odds of exclusion. Timely vaccination protects students, families and staff. Further, it significantly lowers the likelihood of disruption of the educational process by health department-conducted disease investigation and follow up.

For your reference, a measles case in any school would result in the exclusion of unvaccinated students for up to 21 days per exposure. Please feel free to call our Epidemiology team at (915) 212-6520 if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Robert Resendes, MBA, MT (ASCP)
Public Health Director

Hector Ocaranza, M.D., MPH
Public Health Authority
El Paso City/County

Robert Resendes – Public Health Director
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