



W. Marshall Taylor Jr., Acting Director

Promoting and protecting the health of the public and the environment

February 11, 2015

Dear Childcare Provider,

By now you've likely heard about the measles outbreak associated with travel to Disneyland in California. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is reporting 121 cases so far this year in multiple states, most of them stemming from the Disneyland outbreak that began in late December 2014. The vast majority of these cases occurred among individuals who had not been vaccinated.

The current outbreak underscores the ongoing risk of measles and the importance of getting vaccinated to protect staff, children and their families. Measles is among the most contagious diseases known. Because it is so contagious, measles is an immediately reportable condition, meaning that cases of the disease **must be reported to DHEC by phone within 24 hours**.

Measles is transmitted by contact with an infected person through coughing and sneezing. The measles virus may also remain infectious for up to two hours in the airspace after an infected person leaves an enclosed area. Severe complications can occur with measles, including pneumonia, encephalitis, and even death.

The Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine is the best way to protect children and staff from measles and prevent potential outbreaks. The MMR vaccine is recommended for all infants at 12 months of age and is, as you know, a requirement to attend childcare or school in South Carolina. We encourage all childcare centers to remind parents of the MMR requirement and encourage them to talk to their healthcare provider if their child has not yet received the vaccine.

Here in South Carolina, we're fortunate that no cases of measles have been reported to the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC). In fact, a review of current and historical records shows there have not been any instances of measles in South Carolina as far back as 1999. DHEC will continue to monitor the national outbreak and keep you updated on the situation. You can visit www.scdhec.gov/measles to get continuous updates on measles occurrence in the U.S. and learn more about what we're doing here in South Carolina to stay ahead of the situation.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the MMR vaccine or making sure your childcare center is doing everything it can to guard against measles, please do not hesitate to contact our Immunization Division at 1-800-277-4687 or Immunize@dhec.sc.gov.

Sincerely,

Leanne S. Bailey, RN, MPH
Director
Division of Immunization