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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

School Notice of Measles Outbreak in Shelby County

April 28, 2016

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Measles has now been confirmed in six Shelby County residents. The Shelby County Health Department has identified three unrelated cases in different parts of the county and three additional cases linked to them. The source of measles for the first three cases is unknown. Because the people with measles have been in public places and healthcare facilities while infectious, additional cases of measles are likely to occur in our region.

Measles is an illness that spreads very easily through the air. Simply being in the same room with someone who has measles is enough to become infected. Because measles is so contagious, it can spread rapidly once introduced and cause outbreaks, especially in schools or day cares where any unvaccinated children may be present.

The MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine is the best way to protect your child. Children attending daycare who have had their first birthday are required to have one dose of MMR; children attending Kindergarten in Tennessee are required to have two doses. One dose of MMR vaccine will protect nearly 19 out of 20 children vaccinated; the second MMR protects most children not protected by the first dose.

If your child has not received at least one dose of MMR and is exposed to measles, he/she would be kept out of school or child care to prevent further spread of disease for *at least 21 days* after the exposure. Tennessee law authorizes schools and daycares to exclude children who have not been vaccinated as required in the event of an outbreak. This is done to protect them and others including infants and ill children who cannot be vaccinated. Children who are not sick and receive an MMR would be able to return to school.

What can you do?

The MMR vaccine is safe and very effective at preventing measles infection. Two doses of MMR are routinely recommended for all children, with the first dose at age 12-15 months and the second dose routinely given at age 4-6 years. The second dose may be given as soon as one month after the first dose, if desired, and such a dose meets school requirements.

All parents and guardians should ensure that their children are up-to-date with their measles vaccination. If your child provided a complete Official Tennessee Immunization Certificate when he/she

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enrolled in Kindergarten, the vaccine requirements have been met. If you did not have a complete certificate, or had an exemption to immunization, talk to your child's healthcare provider to determine if your child needs an MMR vaccine.

If your child has not received the recommended MMR doses, **contact your health care provider** as soon as possible to arrange for immunization. If you do not have a health care provider, you can call the Shelby County Health Department Immunization Clinic at 901-222-9331. If you think your child has measles, call your health care provider so they can arrange to examine your child without exposing any other patients to infection.

For general information about measles, visit the Shelby County Health Department website at www.SCHDResponse.com or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/measles.

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