




GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Department on Disability Services
Developmental Disabilities Administration

BULLETIN

TO: All Providers

FROM: Laura L. Nuss, Director 
Department on Disability Services

RE: Public Health Update: Measles Outbreaks in the District of Columbia

DATE: February 26, 2015

A public health bulletin is being generated to all providers by the Department on Disabilities Services (DDS), Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA), as we recognize the seriousness of reports surrounding the outbreaks of measles. District of Columbia health officials have confirmed two cases of measles this year in the District. According to the District of Columbia Department of Health (DOH), the outbreaks of measles aren't related to the cases from Disneyland. Due to these reported cases, measures must be taken to improve awareness, reviewing and following guidelines for infection control and reporting protocols. These steps can serve as your best possible protection from exposure of the virus.

Measles is a highly contagious infection caused by the measles virus. The initial signs and symptoms typically include fever (often greater than 104 degrees), cough, runny nose, red eyes and a red flat rash which usually start on the face and migrate over the body. Measles is airborne which spreads easily through coughs and sneezes of those infected. It may also be spread through contact with saliva or nasal secretions. People are infectious to others four days before to four days after the start of the rash. It is important to note, that there is no specific treatment for measles, only supportive care measures to address the symptoms. You want to ensure that universal precautions are followed at all times and your staff is trained in accordance to your policies and procedures on infection control.

As addressed in the Health and Wellness Standards regarding immunization, it is recommended that providers follow the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention Adult Immunization Schedule in conjunction with the person's primary care physician. The Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine is recommended for adults who have no documented evidence of measles immunity or completion of the series. According to the CDC, unvaccinated people are at the highest risk for acquiring the disease and developing complications if exposed.

Any suspected case of an outbreak of measles is to be reported to the D.C. Department of Health Division of Epidemiology-Disease Surveillance and Investigation within two hours (see attached Reportable Diseases in the District of Columbia). According to DDS policy and procedure, you will need to also generate an incident report, contact the Service Coordinator and Duty Officer. If you have any questions please contact Shirley Quarles-Owens, Supervisory Community Health Nurse at 202-730-1708 or shirley.quarles-owens@dc.gov.