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Dear School Officials and Parents:

As you know, areas of New York State are currently experiencing a measles outbreak, including the lower Hudson Valley and parts of New York City. Measles spreads easily and can be dangerous to anyone who is not vaccinated. If you have questions about measles or the measles vaccine, do not hesitate to call the New York State Measles Hotline at 888-364-4837.

Sullivan County has had two confirmed cases of measles but the individuals are no longer contagious.

WHAT PEOPLE CAN DO

Locally, anyone who is concerned about their risk if exposed to measles should locate their immunization records. Those born before 1957 are presumed to be immune. Prior to 1989, it was common to only receive one MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella vaccine shot). Two are recommended for full (up to 97%) immunity and protection. Most people should have had two MMRs, but there will be residents who are either immune compromised and cannot receive it, or are too young to be fully vaccinated (infants and young children, pregnant women without MMR history).

The best course of action is for the parents and adults to look into their medical histories and then speak to their health care provider. If they are unsure of their immunity, they can have what's known as a titer test to see if they are immune and then, if low, get a booster MMR.

The Sullivan County Public Health Department strongly recommends that:

- **All school nurses and parents ensure that children and are up-to-date with their immunizations** per the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practice (ACIP) guidelines
- Be alert to signs and symptoms of measles and other vaccine preventable disease (VPD)
- Schools should maintain current and accurate immunization records for all students. Additionally, schools should maintain a detailed list of students who are not fully protected against VPD.

RECOGNIZING MEASLES SYMPTOMS

What is Measles?

Measles is a highly contagious respiratory disease (in the lungs and breathing tubes) caused by a virus that is spread by direct contact with nasal or throat secretions of infected people (when a person infected with the measles virus breathes, coughs, or sneezes). Measles is one of the most contagious viruses on earth; one measles infected person can give the virus to 18 others. In fact, 90% of unvaccinated people exposed to the virus become infected. You can catch measles just by being in a room where a person with measles has been,

up to 2 hours after that person is gone. And you can catch measles from an infected person even before they have a measles rash.

Common symptoms

Symptoms usually appear 10-12 days after exposure but may appear as early as 7 days and as late as 21 days after exposure. Measles typically begins with

- high fever,
- cough,
- runny nose (coryza), and
- red, watery eyes (conjunctivitis)

Then:

- Two or three days after symptoms begin, tiny white spots (Koplik spots) may appear inside the mouth.
- Three to five days after symptoms begin, a rash breaks out. It usually begins as flat red spots that appear on the face at the hairline and spread downward to the neck, trunk, arms, legs, and feet. Small raised bumps may also appear on top of the flat red spots. The spots may become joined together as they spread from the head to the rest of the body. When the rash appears, a person's fever may go up to more than 104° Fahrenheit.
- After a few days, the fever subsides and the rash fades.

People are considered infectious from four days before to four days after the appearance of the rash.

Immunity takes approximately 2 weeks after vaccination for full protection if someone has low immunity or has only had one MMR and receives a second MMR. Please visit our website or refer the public there, <http://sullivanyny.us/Departments/Publichealth/Measles> .

WHAT WE'RE DOING

We have sent a letter to all summer camp operators through the NYS Department of Health office in Monticello and all Sullivan County youth summer recreational youth camps. We are placing posters and flyers in the lobbies of County buildings and local businesses. We are conducting outreach to various community groups and would be happy to schedule something as resources allow.

I have met with and am in communication with BOCES Superintendent Robert Dufour. Should it become necessary to conduct immunization clinics or push out communications for the public to be aware of, our offices have a plan in place to ensure immediate notification of all districts or a specific school as appropriate.

PLEASE SHARE THESE RESOURCES

Please share a link to our webpage with measles information on your websites and newsletters as appropriate. It is currently live: <http://sullivanyny.us/Departments/Publichealth/Measles>. Residents can call the Sullivan County Public Health Information Line at 845-513-2268 or the New York State Department of Health Measles Information Line at (888) 364-4837.

The Measles Vaccine

A safe and effective measles vaccine that can prevent suffering and death has been available for more than 50 years. For more information click [here](#) or visit <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/diseases/child/measles.html> .

High community vaccination rates help protect people who cannot get vaccinated because they are too young or have specific health conditions.

WHERE TO OBTAIN VACCINATION

MMR vaccines are available at your local health care provider or by calling a local federally qualified health center, such as [Refuah Health Center](#) in South Fallsburg (845) 482-9394; and [Hudson River Health Care](#) in

Monticello (845) 794-2010. The federally qualified health centers see uninsured or underinsured patients on a sliding fee scale and by appointment. They may require patients new to their centers to have a well visit first, before a vaccine can be given. In addition, the [Greater Hudson Valley Health Care System](#) operates four primary care centers as well in Callicoon, Livingston Manor, Monticello and Bethel.

Our monthly immunization clinic for uninsured or children receiving Medicaid is available at Sullivan County Public Health Services. The next immunization clinic is May 8 from 5-7 pm or parents may call us at (845) 292-5910.

We want to reassure school officials and parents that the greatest number of persons who are fully immunized will provide the broadest protection for residents and minimize any outbreak if measles exposures do occur in Sullivan County.

Sincerely,
Nancy McGraw, LCSW, MBA, MPH
Public Health Director
Sullivan County, NY

Resources

- New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) Communicable Disease Reporting: <http://www.health.ny.gov/professionals/diseases/reporting/communicable/>.
- For NYS school vaccine schedule: https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/immunization/recommended_vaccinations.htm.
- Centers for Disease Control recommended Vaccine Schedules: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/index.html>
- NYS Outbreak Control Guidelines for Vaccine Preventable Diseases: http://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/immunization/providers/outbreak_control_guidelines.htm
- Communicable Disease Fact Sheets are available from the NYSDOH at: <http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/>
 - Pertussis fact sheet: <http://www.health.ny.gov/publications/2171/>
 - Varicella fact sheet: http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/chickenpox/fact_sheet.htm
 - Measles information: <https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/2170/>