

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**DATE: 4/2/19**

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**PRESS RELEASE**

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**WITH MEASLES STILL A CONCERN IN OCEAN COUNTY, OCHD RELEASES IMPORTANT TIPS, STATS AND RESOURCES FOR RESIDENTS, HEALTH PROVIDERS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS!**

(Toms River) - It didn't take long for one measles outbreak to end in early 2019, than for a new one to appear in Ocean County only a few weeks later. As of April 2, 2019, there are now 6 confirmed cases of measles being reported by the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) in Ocean County.

The first outbreak had a total of 33 confirmed cases and ran from October 2018 to mid-January 2019. Recently, the NJDOH released some vital statistics from those 33 cases. It was learned that 79% of people that were infected with measles were not inoculated with the combination MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine. Three percent of cases had just one of the required two-part vaccine series, while 16% of cases were found to be fully vaccinated.

The report also shows that the age range of the 33 cases was 6 months to 59 years old and the average age being just over 11 years. A little more than 57% of cases were in residents between the age of 5 to 18. The lowest age bracket infected was the 30-plus range, with only 3% of cases.

Ocean County Freeholder Gerry P. Little, liaison to the Ocean County Board of Health explains, "The Ocean County Health Department gained a lot of valuable information from the first outbreak of measles. That's only making it easier to navigate this occurrence of measles as they continue to work diligently alongside the state health department, area health care providers, and school and community leaders in an effort to keep residents safe."

The OCHD wants to remind residents how serious this highly contagious disease is. Residents should check to make sure their family members are up-to-date on the MMR vaccine and all other age-appropriate immunizations.

By coughing or sneezing, someone can spread the virus for four days before the telltale rash appears. The measles virus can live up to 9 hours in the air or on nearby surfaces. **Nine of 10 unvaccinated people who come in contact with someone with measles will more than likely catch the virus**. Symptoms typically start with a high fever, and days later a rash appears on the face and then the body.

"People are reminded to check their immunization records. If there is any sign of symptoms to contact your healthcare provider prior to showing up at that provider’s office so that appropriate arrangements can be made for examination or treatment," states Daniel E. Regenye, OCHD Public Health Coordinator.

Health care providers should maintain vigilance for measles importation and have a high index of suspicion for measles in people that traveled abroad. Suspected measles cases should be immediately reported to the OCHD, and specimens should be obtained for laboratory testing in a timely manner. All health care personnel should have documented evidence of immunity on file

at their workplace.

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As an added precaution, hospital emergency departments are encouraged to post signage which directs staff and/or patients to identify anyone showing signs of fever or rash.

"The state and county are encouraging an open line of communication and making information and resources readily available to the public and health care professionals, adds Regenye. "It's takes a team effort and consistent support when dealing with an issue such as a measles outbreak no matter how large or small."

Regenye offers additional recommendations such as determining immune status of contacts and quarantine for people who cannot produce documentation of immunity from day 5 through day 21 following exposure.

To obtain additional information regarding measles, please visit our website at [www.ochd.org](http://www.ochd.org) or check out the NJDOH measles page: <https://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/topics/measles.shtml>. Also, please check out our new website at [www.phu2.org](http://www.phu2.org), to access and learn more about our Public Health is You Too! campaign to help equip you to take simple steps to improve your health.

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