[DATE]

Dear [INSERT GROUP - employees, staff, students, families, etc.]

Southeast Michigan, along with other states, is experiencing a measles outbreak. The Ottawa County Department of Public Health (OCDPH) wants to make sure the community is protected against disease. Measles is a highly contagious disease. Coughing, sneezing and contact with a contaminated surface passes the virus to others. The measles virus can live in the air and on objects for two hours. Measles is so contagious that an infected person could make nine out of 10 non-immune people sick.

Measles can cause serious health problems like croup, ear infections, hearing loss, pneumonia, seizures, encephalitis and even death. Symptoms of measles may include a high fever, cough, runny nose, inflamed eyes, sore throat and tiny white spots on the gums, cheeks and roof of the mouth. Three to five days after these symptoms a red blotchy rash will appear that begins on the face and moves down to the neck, chest, arms, legs and feet. If symptoms of measles develop, call your doctor’s office or the emergency department **before** going. They will need to take more precautions to prevent measles exposure to others.

The OCDPH requests that everyone know and have documentation of their measles immunity status. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention considers a person immune to measles if they are:

* An adult born before 1957, had the measles vaccine (MMR), have lab confirmation of past infection or had a blood test indicating immunity. Some adults should have two doses of the MMR vaccine (college students, health care staff and international travelers).
* A child one-year-old through three-years-old with one dose of the MMR vaccine.
* A child four-years-old through 18 years old with two doses of the MMR vaccine.

These vaccine recommendations may change in an outbreak situation. If you do not know your vaccination status, contact your health care provider. The vaccine is safe and it is not harmful to get another dose if you are already immune to measles. The recommended two doses of the vaccine are about 97% effective in preventing measles. There is no treatment for measles–only prevention. **Vaccination is the best protection against the measles.**

Exposure to a case of measles may prompt the OCDPH to exclude any exposed adult or child without documented immunity from work, school, childcare and public activities. Exclusion can last for 21 days after identifying the last case of measles since it can take that long for symptoms to develop after exposure. The [Michigan Public Health Code Act 368 of 1978](http://www.legislature.mi.gov/(S(rnewqfpm1eu5fjs4pbhrx5tb))/mileg.aspx?page=GetObject&objectname=mcl-Act-368-of-1978) and the [Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Communicable Disease Rules](https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-71551_2945_5103_26138-15166--,00.html) grant local public health departments this authority to act in the best interests of public health and prevent the spread of disease. We understand the educational and economic impact an exclusion may have on families and the community. People who do not have measles immunity need to have a plan in place before exclusion becomes necessary as a disease control measure. **Please know your vaccination status and have documentation of immunity.** If you still need to get vaccinated, please do so as soon as possible. If you cannot be vaccinated because of a medical condition, please talk with your doctor. For more information about measles and the MMR vaccine, visit [www.cdc.gov/measles](http://www.cdc.gov/measles).   
To schedule a vaccination, please contact your health care provider.   
  
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