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MEASLES ALERT

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Issued to: Chief Medical Officers and National Epidemiologists in CARPHA Member States

There is currently a multi-state outbreak of Measles in the USA associated with travel to Disneyland Resort Theme Parks (December 2014 – January 2015). This has affected several US states and Mexico. To-date, the CDC has reported 68 persons have been confirmed with Measles in this outbreak. Details of this outbreak event are available here: (<http://www.cdc.gov/measles/cases-outbreaks.html>) and here: (<http://emergency.cdc.gov/han/han00376.asp>)

The Caribbean sub-region has been successful in maintaining a measles-free status since 1991. In light of the strong travel ties between the Caribbean and the USA, and given that we are in the midst of the tourism high-season, CARPHA would like to advise enhanced vigilance for fever-rash syndromes among members of our local and visitor populations.

Please ensure that health care practitioners are reminded to:

- Check the vaccination history of persons presenting with fever-rash syndromes.
- Ask about recent travel to Disneyland (California) or known contact with ill persons returning from Disneyland.
- Consider measles if a patient presents with febrile-rash illness and clinically compatible symptoms (cough, coryza, and/or conjunctivitis).
- Pay special attention to fever-rash syndromes in persons too young to have been routinely vaccinated (<1yr of age) or persons who were unable or unwilling to be vaccinated for various reasons.
- Isolate suspect measles cases from family members in the home, or other patients in institutions

Please continue to utilise existing mechanisms for case reporting, investigation, sample collection and submission for Measles testing to CARPHA (WHO/PAHO EPI Reference Laboratory), as one of the diseases under the Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI). Please check the EPI field guide or the EPI manager in-country for further information.



CDC recommends that members of the general public planning to travel to countries with measles transmission be notified that infants 6 through 11 months old can and should receive 1 dose of MMR vaccine before departure.¹ PAHO, while not making a similar recommendation, reminds Member States to ensure coverage of all persons routinely eligible for vaccination and to ensure that systems are in place for early detection and management of cases.

CARPHA will continue to monitor the data arising from the US outbreak, along with the data generated by the EPI surveillance systems and will keep the CARPHA Member State community apprised of pertinent developments as they arise.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Official Health Advisory. Recommendations for Health Care providers. Jan 23, 2015. Available at: <http://emergency.cdc.gov/han/han00376.asp>
Resources and the CARPHA Laboratory User Manual are available on the CARPHA website: <http://www.CARPHA.org>