

BLASTFAX

MEASLES ALERT: Measles, United States, January 1–April 25, 2008

From January 1 through April 25, 2008, CDC received a total of 64 reports of **confirmed** measles cases in the U.S. This is the highest number reported for the same time period since 2001. Cases have been reported from 9 states (Arizona, California, Michigan, Wisconsin, Hawaii, Illinois, New York, Virginia, and Pennsylvania); outbreaks are ongoing in 4 of the states. No cases have been identified in Georgia since 2004.

All of the outbreaks originated from exposure to infected visitors from abroad or unvaccinated U.S. residents who had recently returned from travel to countries experiencing outbreaks. Most of the internationals came from countries within the European region of the World Health Organization where measles outbreaks are ongoing.

Sixty-three of the 64 cases were unvaccinated or had unknown or undocumented vaccination status. The patients ranged in age from 5 months to 71 years. Fourteen patients were hospitalized; no deaths have been reported.

Transmission has occurred in community and healthcare settings, including homes, childcare centers, schools, hospitals, emergency rooms, and physicians' offices; primarily among unvaccinated groups.

These outbreaks resulted primarily from failure to vaccinate, many because of personal or religious belief exemption. In addition, unvaccinated children tend to be clustered geographically and/or socially, augmenting the risk for outbreaks. These facts highlight the following:

- the ongoing risk of measles in unvaccinated persons
- the risk of unvaccinated persons transmitting measles to others, including infants too young to be vaccinated
- the importance of maintaining high levels of vaccination

Health care institutions and providers should maintain vigilance among staff members and patients for the following:

- All health care personnel should have documented evidence of measles immunity on file at their work location; the AAP and the ACIP recommends documented history of disease or two doses of measles containing vaccine.
- Advise patients who plan to travel abroad of the importance of measles vaccination.
- The possibility of measles should be considered in persons with clinically compatible illness and a history of recent international travel, exposure to international travelers, or exposure to a confirmed measles case.
- ***Suspect cases should be isolated promptly and Public Health should be notified immediately. Cases should be managed in a manner that prevents further disease spread in healthcare settings; please do not refer patients to other providers.***
- ***Please call your local health department or 1-866-PUB-HLTH (782-4584) (24 hours) to report a suspect measles case. If you have questions about measles and would like to speak to an epidemiologist, please call 404-657-2588 and ask for Beth Ward or Julie Gabel.***

For questions or concerns regarding this blastfax or any other immunization information, please contact the Chapter's Immunization Coordinator, Mike Chaney at (404) 881-5094 or mchaney@gaaap.org.