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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH CONFIRMS FOURTH CASE OF MEASLES IN CONNECTICUT FOR 2019

PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSIONER REMINDS CT RESIDENTS TO MAKE SURE ALL
VACCINATIONS ARE UP TO DATE

Hartford, CT – The Connecticut Department of Public Health today is confirming a fourth case of measles in Connecticut for 2019 in a school aged child from Fairfield County. The public health investigation of this case has determined that the child was not infectious while at school. Information received by the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) indicates that the child contracted measles in early October. The latest case of measles is not related to three previously confirmed cases in Connecticut reported in January and April.

“We are monitoring and investigating this case very closely, including working with our local health departments and medical providers to follow up with any individuals that may have been exposed to measles,” said Connecticut DPH Commissioner Renée D. Coleman-Mitchell. “Science tells us that the single best thing anyone can do to protect themselves from this highly contagious virus is to get vaccinated. Overall, Connecticut has high vaccination rates, so we are at low risk for a widespread measles outbreak. This latest confirmed case, coupled with declining statewide immunization numbers for measles, is exactly why Governor Lamont and I are recommending repeal of non-medical exemptions for vaccination.”

Commissioner Coleman-Mitchell continued, “If you have a fever and a rash and you think you might have measles, you should avoid public settings and call your healthcare provider BEFORE going directly to a healthcare facility so steps can be taken to avoid possibly exposing others.”

The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) is working with local health departments and healthcare providers to identify and inform identified contacts of the case. The average incubation period of measles (from contact with a case until onset of rash) is 14 days, with a range of 7–21 days. Cases are considered infectious from four days before rash onset through four days after. It is possible that secondary cases of measles among some of these contacts may occur, especially among those who have never been vaccinated for measles.

Fortunately, the majority of people exposed to measles in Connecticut are not at-risk of developing the disease since most people have either been vaccinated or have had measles in the past, before vaccination became routine. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends all children get two doses of Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine, starting with the first dose at 12- through 15-months of age, and the second dose at 4 through 6 years of

age. One dose of measles vaccine is about 93% effective at preventing measles if exposed to the virus. Two doses are about 97% effective. Measles vaccine does not cause measles illness.

Adults should have at least one dose of MMR vaccine. Certain groups need two doses of MMR, including: college students, health care workers, international travelers, and persons at high risk for measles complications. Adults born in the U.S. before 1957 are considered immune to measles from past exposures, but in situations where exposure to measles is likely, these adults may benefit from an additional dose of MMR vaccine. Individuals who are unsure of their vaccination status are encouraged to check with their physician.

A typical case of measles begins with mild to moderate fever, cough, runny nose, red eyes (conjunctivitis), and sore throat. Three to five days after the start of these symptoms, a red or reddish-brown rash appears, usually starting on a person's face at the hairline and spreading downward to the entire body. At the time the rash appears, a person's fever may spike to more than 104 degrees Fahrenheit. The rash typically lasts at least a few days and then disappears in the same order. People with measles may be contagious up to 4 days before the rash appears and for four days after the day the rash appears.

From January 1 to October 1, 2019, 1,249 individual cases of measles have been confirmed in 31 states. This is the largest number of cases reported in the U.S. since measles was eliminated in 2000.

For more information about measles, please visit www.cdc.gov/measles.

More information on annual statistics for vaccine preventable diseases in Connecticut is available here:

<https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Immunizations/Case-Occurrence-of-Selected-Diseases-Connecticut>