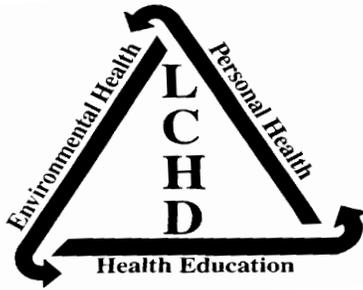


## MEDIA RELEASE



Date: April 17, 2019  
To: All Media  
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**For Immediate Release**

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### “Measles Awareness”

**OTTAWA, IL** – Measles has been highlighted in the news frequently since the beginning of 2019, as there have been multiple outbreaks of measles in the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there have been 555 individual cases of measles confirmed in 20 states since January 1, 2019. This is the second-greatest number of cases reported in the U.S. since measles was eliminated in 2000. Illinois is included in the list of states that have reported cases, with 7 cases being reported on the Illinois Department of Public Health’s (IDPH) website. Currently, LaSalle County has no confirmed cases of measles.

Measles is a serious, highly contagious disease caused by a virus. The virus is spread easily through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes or by direct contact with infected nose or throat secretions. It is so contagious that if one person has it, 9 out of 10 people around him or her will also become infected if they are not protected. A person can get measles just by being in a room where a person with measles has been, even up to two hours after that person has left. An infected person can spread measles to others even before knowing he/she has the disease—from four days before developing the measles rash through four days afterward.

Symptoms of measles include a rash that starts on the face and neck and then spreads, a high fever, runny nose, cough and red, watery eyes. The fever starts about 10 days (range seven to 18 days) after exposure. The rash appears about 14 days after exposure. Infants and adults usually are sicker than children and teenagers. Treatment includes bed rest, lots of fluids and medicine for fever and headache. Antibiotics do not help – either to cure measles or to prevent it. There are no anti-viral drugs for treating measles. The virus can cause serious health complications, such as pneumonia or encephalitis, and even death. If you think you have measles, please call your physician’s office.

Measles was declared eliminated from the U.S. in 2000 thanks to a highly effective vaccination program. Eliminated means that the disease is no longer constantly present in this country. However, measles is still common in many parts of the world, including some countries in

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Europe, Asia, the Pacific, and Africa. Worldwide, about 20 million people get measles each year (CDC). Even if your family does not travel internationally, you could come into contact with measles anywhere in your community. Every year, measles is brought into the United States by unvaccinated travelers (Americans or foreign visitors) who get measles while they are in other countries. Anyone who is not protected against measles is at risk.

The best protection against measles is the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine. MMR vaccine provides long-lasting protection against all strains of measles. Children need two doses of MMR vaccine for best protection. The vaccine is recommended for children at 12 months of age, and the second vaccination is typically given at 4-6 years of age. The second vaccination of measles vaccine is now required in Illinois for all children kindergarten through 12th grade.

Anyone born after January 15, 1957, who has not had at least one dose of measles vaccine after 12 months of age or who has not had the measles should be immunized. All persons working in health care settings should receive two doses of measles vaccine (MMR) unless they have had the disease and, therefore, are immune. Anyone planning to travel internationally, should make sure they are protected against measles and other dangerous diseases before they go abroad. If your infant is traveling overseas, the vaccine recommendations are a little different:

- If your baby is 6 through 11 months old, he or she should receive 1 dose of MMR vaccine before leaving.
- If your child is 12 months of age or older, he or she will need 2 doses of MMR vaccine (separated by at least 28 days) before departure.

Women should not get the vaccine if they are already pregnant or if they plan to get pregnant within three months after getting the vaccine.

The health department holds monthly childhood immunization clinics. Adult vaccines, which include travel vaccines and information specific to an international destination are also available at the department. The health department can bill vaccines to private insurance and offers low-cost childhood and adult immunizations. Appointments are required. For more information on measles, vaccines, or immunization clinics please contact the LaSalle County Health Department at (815) 433-3366 or visit our website at [www.lasallecounty](http://www.lasallecounty).

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