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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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ARE YOU IMMUNIZED AGAINST MEASLES?

“We continue to hear about the number of people who have contracted or been exposed to measles,” stated Daniel Regenye, Ocean County Health Department (OCHD) Public Health Coordinator. At this time, the 2015 measles outbreak already has spread to more individuals than health officials typically see in an entire year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported Thursday.”

Regenye continued, “Most of the cases are traceable to an outbreak a couple of theme parks in Southern California that began in late December and now has spread to several other states, including Utah, Washington, Oregon and Colorado and New York. The CDC is urging parents to get the measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine (MMR) for their children and themselves. The two-dose regimen of the MMR is 97% effective and has been proven safe despite concerns that the vaccine could lead to autism. A multitude of studies have proven that the MMR does NOT cause autism and according to the CDC, the MMR is very safe, very effective and extremely necessary.”

For those who cannot remember if they have had the measles or if they were immunized against the measles, a simple blood test can be performed to see if you have antibodies to measles which you would have from either having had the measles or the measles vaccination. Your health care provider can request this test to be performed.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics Childhood Immunization Schedule, the first dose of vaccine is given after a child’s first birthday. Measles is a highly contagious virus that is so contagious that a person can contract measles by inhaling the virus hours after a person with the disease has left the room. Measles can also lead to serious complications, including pneumonia, brain damage and deafness. About 15 percent of the people infected in the current outbreak required hospitalization.

“Although the United States declared measles eliminated in 2000, it has been resurgent in recent years, fueled by huge epidemics in other countries that were imported into the United States by travelers and spread mostly among unvaccinated people. This is another reminder how important it is for everyone, children and adults to be vaccinated against vaccine-preventable diseases, such as measles.

The OCHD website at www.ochd.org will continue with measles updates and information necessary for our residents. You can also follow the Health Department on Twitter@OCpublichealth or like us on Facebook.

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