

April 29, 2025

County of Ventura Board of Supervisors

Subject: **Receive and File a Report from Ventura County Public Health on the Status of Measles in Ventura County**

Recommendation:

It is recommended that your Board receive and file a report from Ventura County Public Health (VCPH) on the status of measles in Ventura County, including case and vaccination trends and community health efforts.

Discussion:

Measles is a highly contagious viral disease caused by the measles virus, spreading primarily through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks, making measles one of the world's most contagious diseases. The infection can lead to severe, life-long consequences or death, especially in children. The virus can remain suspended in the air for up to two hours, making transmission extremely probable in crowded or enclosed spaces.

In 2000, the U.S. declared measles eliminated with the success of widespread vaccination. In recent years, declining measles immunization rates have allowed the resurgence of outbreaks in pockets of the U.S. The measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine is highly effective, providing 97% protection from measles infection with two doses. The spread of measles can be prevented if 2-dose vaccine coverage remains at 95% or above in the community, which achieves something known as herd-immunity.

As of April 11, 2025, there are 712 confirmed measles cases in the U.S. There were 285 confirmed cases in the U.S. in 2024, reflecting a 150% increase in 2025 within the first quarter of the year. In 2024, California had 15 total confirmed measles cases. As of April 7, 2025, 9 confirmed measles cases have been reported in California among 7 counties. There are currently no reported cases in Ventura County.

Ventura County currently has an MMR vaccination rate of 94% among kindergarteners for the 2023-2024 school year, which is below the herd immunity threshold and lower than the CA state average of 95.6%. While we have not had any recent measles cases in

Ventura County, our current MMR vaccination rates, and the current increased measles activity in the U.S. increases the chances that we will see measles cases locally, if herd immunity is not reached.

The MMR vaccine provides the best protection against measles disease and serious illness, making it our best defense against the disease and its complications. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends two doses of MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine for:

- Children: one dose at 12 months of age and another at 4-6 years.
- Older children, adolescents and adults without documented doses of MMR vaccine.

VCPH has implemented various proactive strategies to address public health needs and promote immunization. To monitor trends and support vulnerable populations, our Immunization Program analyzes school-reported vaccination data to identify schools with low immunization rates. The Immunization and Communicable Disease programs actively engage with school nurses during monthly Ventura County Office of Education meetings to provide educational tools and to support parent outreach. Additionally, VCPH reaches out to local health care providers through public health advisories, which include clinical guidance for recognizing measles and vaccination recommendations. This ensures that local health care providers remain informed and prepared.

Community education and transparent communication are key components of VCPH's strategy. The VCPH website hosts up-to-date information for both residents and clinicians. Simultaneously, regular vaccine reminders are shared through our VCPH social media platforms to reach a broader audience. In anticipation of spring break travel, the department issued a press release in English and Spanish on March 11, 2025, advising residents to ensure they are up to date on their MMR vaccine.

Overall, the department is prepared for case investigation and laboratory testing. In the event Ventura County has a suspected or confirmed measles case, VCPH's Communicable Disease program is ready to activate a response plan which involves contact investigation, immunity verification, symptom monitoring using up-to-date surveillance and monitoring tools in collaboration with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and provide education on preventative measures accordingly. The Public Health Laboratory is prepared to test measles samples and has a surge plan in place in the event of an outbreak.

While Ventura County continues to remain vigilant and encourages immunization to prevent measles cases, cases continue to rise globally, nationally, and among Californians due to international travel and pockets with lower vaccination rates. VCPH is taking a proactive, data-driven, and collaborative approach to ensure the county remains prepared and protected.

Strategic Plan:

The recommended report supports the County's Strategic Priority to Maintain Healthy, Safe, and Resilient Communities.

This letter has been reviewed by the County Executive Office, County Counsel, and the Auditor-Controller's Office. If you have any questions regarding this item, please call Rigoberto Vargas at (805) 981-5101.



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