

April 29, 2010

To Students, Parents and Staff of Fraser Health Schools:

### Update on Measles in Fraser Health Schools

As you may have heard, there is an outbreak of measles in British Columbia. It began in the Lower Mainland and has spread to all regions of the province. We have had over 20 cases in Fraser Health, including some students and parents of students. To date there have been no cases in Fraser East (Abbotsford and east), but measles spreads very quickly and we expect to see cases in the East as well.

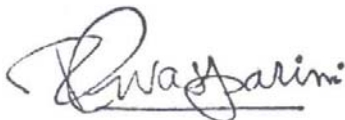
Measles is a very serious infection which causes brain damage in one out of every thousand people who are infected. Fortunately it has become quite rare in Canada. Thanks to vaccine, most Canadian children are well protected against measles. But measles is still common in other parts of the world, and visitors and travellers can bring it to Canada, which is what happened in the current outbreak. The cases we are seeing now in British Columbia are almost all children who have never been vaccinated or adults who had only a single dose of the vaccine.

**Everyone born after 1956 needs two doses of measles vaccine for full protection against infection. Please check your records and your children's records – we didn't start giving two doses routinely until 1996 but we know now that one dose is not always enough to protect against measles infection.** If you don't have a written record of receiving two doses of vaccine call your local Public Health Unit or doctor's office to arrange for the vaccine. It is extremely safe and effective. People born in 1956 or earlier (and anyone who has had measles infection itself) are considered protected because measles was so common in the past.

If your child has not had measles vaccine, and is exposed to someone with measles in his or her class, your child may be excluded from school for up to three weeks or longer. This is to protect others and keep measles from spreading in schools. Exclusion disrupts family and school life greatly. We all want to avoid it. Now is the time to make sure all students, parents and staff members are protected against measles. If you were born after 1956 you need two doses of vaccine or to be certain you had measles itself.

Need more information? You can find clear information you can trust on the ImmunizeBC website (<http://www.immunizebc.ca>). Your family physician, nurse practitioner, public health nurse, and HealthLink BC (8-1-1) can also answer your questions about measles and the measles vaccine.

Sincerely,



Roland Guasparini, MD, MHSc, FRCPC  
Chief Medical Health Officer

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<b>Hope HU</b> 604-860-7630	<b>Langley HU</b> 604-539-2900	<b>Maple Ridge HU</b> 604-476-7000	<b>Mission HU</b> 604-814-5500	<b>New Westminster HU</b> 604-777-6740	<b>Newport HU, Pt Moody</b> 604-949-7200
<b>Newton HU, Surrey</b> 604-592-2000	<b>North Delta HU</b> 604-507-5400	<b>North Surrey HU</b> 604-587-7900	<b>Port Coquitlam HU</b> 604-777-8700	<b>South Delta HU</b> 604-952-3550	<b>White Rock HU</b> 604-542-4000