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Statement from Public Health Officials in Illinois and Cook County

The following is a joint statement from the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Cook County Department of Public Health:

Public health officials are currently investigating a cluster of measles in a KinderCare Learning Center located at 929 E. Palatine Rd., Palatine, IL. At this time, the cluster includes five children under the age of one. Laboratory testing has confirmed a measles diagnosis for two of the children. Test results for the three remaining cases are still pending, but have been diagnosed based on clinical and epidemiological criteria. At this time, the source of infection for the children is not known. Health officials have taken extra precautions to limit the spread. All students, staff and faculty at this facility have been notified and anyone who has not received the MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine has been instructed to remain at home and away from unvaccinated individuals for the next 21 days.

While these measles cases seem to be focused on the northwest suburban Cook County region, any resident who is unvaccinated and experiences symptoms of a high fever and a rash should call their local health department as well as their healthcare provider. These individuals should notify their doctor or emergency department before seeking care so that staff are able to take appropriate precautions to prevent others from being infected.

Measles is a highly contagious respiratory disease that causes fever, red and sore eyes, runny nose, cough and a characteristic rash. The disease can cause severe health complications, including pneumonia, encephalitis and death. Measles is transmitted by contact with an infected person through coughing or sneezing and can remain in the air and on surfaces for up to two hours. Infected people are contagious from 4 days before their rash starts through 4 days afterwards.

This situation continues to underscore the importance of getting vaccinated. Vaccinations are the safest, most effective way to protect individuals from measles and other potentially dangerous communicable diseases. Individuals who are under the age of one or with certain clinical conditions cannot be vaccinated and are therefore at highest risk for measles. Residents are strongly encouraged to get vaccinated to protect themselves and the most vulnerable members of the community.

At this time, it is not clear if these cases are linked to the previously confirmed case in suburban Cook County or the outbreak associated with Disneyland.

Cook County Department of Public Health officials will be available to answer specific questions about the investigation for the media today 1:00 p.m. at the Cook County Department of Public Health administrative offices located in the Oak Forest Health Center at 15900 S. Cicero Ave., Oak Forest, IL 60452. Media outlets should identify themselves at the guard gate when entering the campus and they will be instructed where to go.

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