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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Measles Cases Increasing Across NYS, Rural Areas Impacted

Elizabethtown, NY. The New York State Department of Health recently reported an increase in measles cases in rural areas of the state, including the Capital, Central, and Western regions. So far in 2026, there have been six confirmed cases of measles in New York City and 40 in New York State outside of NYC, for 46 total. The majority of cases in 2026 have occurred since mid-July. In all of 2025, there were 48 confirmed cases – 20 in New York City and 28 in New York State outside of NYC.

The Essex County Health Department (ECHD) is notifying the public that a single measles case investigated earlier this summer was fully controlled, contained, and presented no continued risk to the community. This isolated case was unrelated to the current increase in measles activity seen in other regions.

“The measles case in Essex County involved an unvaccinated individual who was a contact of a confirmed case traveling from a state experiencing an active measles outbreak,” said Linda Beers, Director of Public Health for ECHD.

Upon learning of their exposure, the individual cooperated fully with public health and medical guidance and voluntarily quarantined. ECHD monitored the individual daily throughout their quarantine period.

“When symptoms developed and a measles diagnosis was confirmed, the individual continued to follow public health guidance,” Beers explained. “At risk household contacts who were susceptible to illness accepted MMR vaccines. Because all involved were so willing to talk with us and follow public health and medical recommendations, no additional cases occurred.”

ECHD extends sincere appreciation to the involved household for their cooperation, respect for public health guidance, and commitment to protecting the wider community. The Department emphasizes that Essex County remains safe, and routine public health measures worked as intended.

“Communicable disease investigations, including contact tracing, are important activities of local health departments because they help us identify people at risk and limit the spread of potentially serious infections,” noted Jessica Darney Buehler, Director of Health Promotion & Planning for ECHD. “With measles in particular, the best protection is with the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine – two doses of MMR vaccine are about 97% effective at preventing measles; one dose is about 93% effective”.

Measles is a highly contagious, serious respiratory disease that causes rash and fever, and can reduce the immune system's ability to fight other infections. The measles virus is spread through the air when someone coughs or sneezes and less often through touching a contaminated surface. Complications of measles can include hospitalization, pneumonia, brain swelling, immune amnesia, and death. Pregnancy complications include miscarriage and preterm birth. More information about measles, current case numbers, immunization data, and more can be found [here](#).

"We urge everyone to ensure they are up-to-date with their MMR vaccines," emphasized Beers. "Most people born before 1957 are considered immune. Others should confirm their vaccination status with their healthcare providers or by calling us at 518-873-3500, especially if traveling internationally or to areas experiencing outbreaks," Beers said.

Infants too young to be vaccinated are particularly at risk, but babies 6 to 11 months old can receive a "dose 0" MMR vaccine if they are traveling abroad or to areas where measles is prevalent. Infants receiving an early MMR dose should still get their next two MMR vaccines on schedule.

Residents with questions about measles or other vaccine preventable illnesses can visit our [website](#) or call 518-873-3500.

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