

**NEW MEXICO HEALTH ALERT NETWORK (HAN) ADVISORY**  
**Confirmed Measles Cases in Lea County, Increased Risk of Exposure to Measles**

February 14, 2025

**Background:**

The New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) is notifying healthcare providers that three measles cases have been confirmed in Lea County, NM. Lea County borders Gaines County, Texas where at least 48 cases have been confirmed, including 13 who were hospitalized.

The 3 confirmed New Mexico cases, two adults and one teen, had no known exposures to the Texas cases- indicating wider community spread and heightened risk of measles transmission in Lea County.

Healthcare providers should be vigilant for febrile rash in unvaccinated or under-vaccinated patients of any age, especially those with recent travel or exposure to known cases such as those in Texas. It is important that your patients be up to date with measles vaccination, and critical for patients with suspected measles to be promptly recognized, isolated, reported, and tested to prevent further spread.

**Recommendations for Clinicians:**

Measles is characterized by a prodrome of fever, malaise, cough, coryza, and conjunctivitis, followed by a maculopapular rash. The rash begins on the head and spreads down the body, and usually appears about 14 days after exposure, but ranges from 7-21 days after exposure. A person with measles is contagious from 4 days before the rash begins to 4 days after it appears. Measles is extremely contagious, and **NMDOH recommends that patients with suspected measles (fever and rash at triage) not be allowed in the waiting room with others.** Preferably patients are initially evaluated outside the clinic. If measles is suspected, the patient should wear a mask and immediately be isolated in a negative-pressure room.

If there is no negative-pressure room at your facility, ensure the patient is masked and placed in a private room with a closed door. Any room occupied by a suspected measles patient should not be used for two hours after the patient leaves, due to measles virus remaining suspended in the air during that time. Patients suspected of having measles should be instructed to isolate themselves at home through four days after rash onset. High-risk contacts, such as those who are pregnant or immunocompromised, may need additional evaluation. About one in five measles cases require hospitalization.

**If measles is suspected, immediately notify NMDOH by calling 1-833-SWNURSE, option 4 (1-833-796-8773) for further guidance and testing approval. Obtain a throat swab or nasopharyngeal swab in viral transport medium for PCR testing at the State Public Health Laboratory.**

The Department of Health is contacting people who may have been exposed and providing guidance to prevent further spread. Additional exposures in the community may come from people who visited the following locations during the specified days and times:

- Stone Elementary School, Hobbs, NM on Thursday, Feb 6.
- Albertsons grocery store 2402 N. Grimes St., Hobbs, NM between the hours of 1:00 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. on Thursday Feb. 6.
- Albertsons grocery store 2402 N. Grimes St., Hobbs, NM between the hours of 1:00 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. on Saturday Feb. 8.
- Crosswinds Community Church, 1701 N Jefferson St., Hobbs, NM between the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. Sunday Feb. 9.
- Walgreens 801 Joe Harvey Blvd, Hobbs, NM between the hours of 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Sunday Feb. 9.
- Nor-Lea Hospital emergency department between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. on Monday Feb. 10.
- Nor-Lea Extended Hours Clinic 1923 N Dal Paso, Hobbs, NM between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 3p.m. on Monday, February 10.
- Nor-Lea Hospital emergency department between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 11.

There is a safe and highly effective measles vaccine available, and healthcare settings should ensure that all staff have received two doses of MMR vaccine or have laboratory evidence of immunity to measles. MMR (measles-mumps-rubella) vaccine is licensed for use in persons 12 months or older; MMRV (measles-mumps-rubella-varicella) vaccine is licensed for use in persons 12 months through 12 years old. One dose has a median effectiveness of 93%, while two doses have a median effectiveness of 97%. Children should receive their first dose at 12-15 months, and their second dose at 4-6 years; the schedule may be modified in situations such as impending international travel or a local outbreak.

**Additional Resources:**

For more information about measles, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/index.html> or call the NMDOH Center for Health Protection at **1-833-SWNURSE** (1-833-796-8773).

Tips for successful vaccine conversations with parents and caregivers can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/hcproviders/talkingtopatients.html>.

**New Mexico Health Alert Network:** To register for the NM Health Alert Network, please visit the following site <https://nm.readyop.com/fs/4cjZ/10b2> Please fill out the registration form completely and click Submit at the bottom of the page, to begin receiving Important health alerts, advisories, and updates.

**Please Note** that our system also utilizes text messaging to notify members of important health information. Due to FCC Regulation changes that are designed to decrease the amount of unwanted spam text messages sent each year to citizens, please save, this phone number **(855) 596-1810** as the **“New Mexico Health Alert Network”** default phone number for your account used for text messages on the mobile device(s) you register with us.

