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To: General Practitioners, Practice Nurses and Health Professionals
From: Dr Greg Simmons, Chief Advisor, Population Health Directorate
Subject: **MEASLES – Active recall of all unimmunised people under 20 years**

Dear colleague

Surveillance

Measles is still circulating in New Zealand, with laboratory confirmed cases in the Northland, Auckland, Waitemata, Counties Manukau, Nelson Marlborough, Canterbury and Southland DHBs in August 2009. A weekly surveillance report is available at

<http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/indexmh/immunisation-diseasesandvaccines-measles>

Improved coverage

The primary care sector has responded very effectively in areas of outbreak. Canterbury continues to administer the largest quantities of MMR vaccine. More children are getting their 15 month MMR immunisation on time.

ACTION: Change to Active Recall

Initially we asked you to focus on active recall of all unimmunised children aged 12 months to 12 years for MMR vaccination. We are now extending this to all children and young people aged 12 months to 20 years.

Please:

- **actively recall and target MMR vaccination to unimmunised children and young people aged 12 months to 20 years**
- **ensure all children receive their second MMR vaccination on time**
- **take all opportunities to offer MMR vaccine to any adults born after 1969 who have no documented history of receiving one dose of MMR vaccine.**

This strategy may vary locally on the advice of the local Medical Officer of Health in areas where there is a high incidence of measles (eg, Canterbury DHB).

Contacts of cases

For infants aged between 6 and 12 months who are contacts of measles cases, practices should offer a dose of MMR. Please discuss with the local Medical Officer of Health.

Case notification

Please notify any suspected measles cases immediately to the local Medical Officer of Health and discuss the process for laboratory confirmation of the diagnosis. Early notification is crucial to enable the public health service to identify and manage close contacts of cases. Many GPs may never have seen a case of measles and it is important to be familiar with its signs and symptoms. Measles is a significant and highly infectious viral respiratory infection. If there is doubt about the clinical diagnosis please contact your local Public Health Unit for advice.

Claiming immunisation benefit subsidy (IBS) for MMR

As part of the response to the measles outbreaks, please be advised that people who are not otherwise eligible for publicly funded health care in New Zealand can be given free measles immunisation and this can be claimed in the usual way.

The electronic claiming system can be used for first and second doses given to children and adults. The system may not work for doses given to infants aged between 6 and 12 months old and has not been fully tested with the different Practice Management Systems. We advise:

- for children over one year, teenagers and adults receiving their **first dose**, use the indicator of 15m (MMR1) and electronically claim the IBS as usual
- for children, teenagers and adults receiving their **second dose**, which can be given at any time after one month after the first dose, use the indicator of 4y (MMR2) and electronically claim the IBS as usual
- any MMR given to those under 1 year (MMR0) can be manually recorded on both the NIR3 and on an IBS claim form.

Support for general practices

A package of resources to support general practices to recall patients and answer questions about MMR immunisation is now available from the health professional section of the Immunisation Advisory Centre (IMAC) website. We are also asking Primary Health Organisations (PHOs) to support practices to immunise against measles in whatever ways they can.

Thank you



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