MEASLES ALERT
Information for NSW Emergency Departments
Please distribute this information to all staff

1. Cases of measles continue to be imported into NSW from overseas
2. Locally-acquired cases have begun to occur and more are likely in the coming weeks.
3. Make sure you have triage measures to identify and immediately isolate suspected measles cases
4. Suspect measles in those presenting with fever and rash irrespective of travel history

Measles in NSW
- Since December 2018, 23 cases of measles have been notified in NSW
- Several cases have spent time in highly populated locations such as hospitals, shopping centres, and backpacker hostels while infectious.
- At highest risk of infection are those who are too young to be vaccinated (<12 months), and those who have not received two doses of measles containing vaccine.
- Suspect measles in people with fever and rash irrespective of travel history.

How does measles present?
- Two to four days of non-specific illness with fever, cough, coryza, and conjunctivitis.
- A maculo-papular rash then typically begins on the face and neck and becomes generalised.
- Cases have occurred in people reporting prior vaccination – these tend to present atypically and may have a distorted temporal progression and/or milder clinical manifestation. Maintain a high index of suspicion if exposure to earlier cases is possible.
- Measles cases are infectious from the day before the prodrome to 4 days after the onset of rash.

Maintain effective triage and case management
- Isolate - patients with fever and rash in a separate room on arrival.
- Notify - call your local public health unit (PHU) on 1300 066 055 immediately about suspected cases – don’t wait for test results before calling. The earlier a PHU knows about a suspected case the more effective containment interventions can be.
- Test – collect a nose and throat viral swab and a first pass urine sample for nucleic acid testing and blood for measles IgG and IgM. Mark specimens as URGENT. Your PHU can assist in expediting testing.
- PCR for wild and vaccine strain with 4-hour turn-around is available 24/7 at Westmead (CIDM-LS); Prince of Wales (SAVID-SEALS) laboratory can also perform rapid PCR by arrangement
- An enhanced triage flow chart is available on the NSW Health measles website https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/measles/Pages/resources.aspx
- Continue to display travel posters and measles posters and be on the look-out for new imports following holiday travel, and locally acquired cases: https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/measles/Pages/default.aspx

Further Information:
- Contact your local public health unit on 1300 066 055

Yours sincerely

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