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Academy of Medicine of Cleveland & Northern Ohio (AMCNO) Warns Public of Measles Threat

(CLEVELAND, OH – May 5) – AMCNO Warns Public of Measles Threat, Need for Protecting our Community from Measles and other Preventable Diseases

There are currently over 800 cases nationwide of measles, including at least 30 here in Ohio. Measles is a highly contagious viral respiratory disease, having previously been eradicated in the United States. Unfortunately, as childhood vaccination rates have declined, we have seen a resurgence, including the death of several children recently in Texas.

“Vaccinations against childhood and adult diseases have been one of the greatest triumphs of medical science, preventing illness and death for millions of children. For children to get sick and possibly die of these infections is a tragedy that we must work to prevent. We encourage all parents to discuss vaccination with their child’s pediatrician,” said AMCNO President Eric Shapiro, MD.

Most people in the United States are protected against measles through vaccination, however, measles is still brought into the United States by unvaccinated travelers, and with declining childhood immunization rates children, especially those too young to be vaccinated, are at risk.

Indeed a new [study](#) by researchers at Stanford Medicine and other universities, which was published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* on April 24, showed that at current immunization rates, researchers predict that measles may become endemic again — circulating in the U.S. — within two decades; with small declines in vaccination, this could happen more quickly. However, small increases in vaccine coverage would prevent this.

When a person with the measles virus sneezes, coughs, or talks, droplets with virus spray into the air. The virus remains active and contagious in the air for up to 2 hours. That means someone who enters a room within 2 hours after an infected individual has been there is exposed to the virus and can get sick. An individual infected with measles can transmit the disease from 4 days prior to the onset of the rash to 4 days after. Measles spreads so easily that if one person has measles, 90% of the people who they contact who have not had measles or received the measles vaccine will become infected.

There is no curative treatment for measles, and approximately 20% of reported measles cases experience one or more complications. As many as one out of 20 children with measles get pneumonia, and about one child in every 1,000 who gets measles develops encephalitis (an acute inflammation of the brain). For every 1,000 children who get measles, one or two will die from it.

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The only effective way to prevent measles is to get your child vaccinated with an MMR vaccine. Talk to your child's physician if you have questions or concerns about the vaccine. While appropriate doses of vitamin A may be helpful for some patients with measles, high doses are toxic and can lead to death. As with any supplements, usage of Vitamin A should be a decision made with your physician.

If you think you or someone you love has measles, call your primary care physician before going to the office.

It is never too late to receive an MMR vaccine if you have not been vaccinated or had measles. Contact your primary care physician or local health department (LHD) for more information. For locations and additional information on LHD's go to <https://bit.ly/41WadUp>. The phone number for the Cuyahoga County Health Department is (216) 201-2000.

Additionally, physicians in our community should stay vigilant in assessing patients for measles as cases continue to rise. Current clinical recommendations can be found here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/measles/hcp/clinical-overview/stay-alert-for-measles-cases.html>.

We know that the measles vaccine is safe and effective at protecting our communities, especially our children. If you or your children are not vaccinated, or had a previous infection, please protect yourselves and others in the community by getting vaccinated.

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About ACADEMY OF MEDICINE OF CLEVELAND AND NORTHERN OHIO

The Academy of Medicine of Cleveland & Northern Ohio (AMCNO) is a nonprofit 501(c)6 professional organization of over 7,400 physicians and medical students with the mission of supporting physicians in being strong advocates for all patients and promoting the practice of the highest quality of medicine. Founded in 1824, AMCNO has a long history of physician advocacy as the oldest professional organization in Ohio. To learn more, visit amcno.org.