

March 29, 2019

**To: Superintendents and Principals of Public Schools and Independent School Authorities**

**Re: Measles Immunization Catch-up Campaign**

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In response to the recent increase in measles cases in British Columbia, as well as outbreaks elsewhere in the world, the Minister of Health has requested that health authorities provide increased opportunities for unimmunized and under-immunized students in B.C., from kindergarten to grade 12, to access the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine or measles, mumps, rubella and varicella vaccine (MMRV).

The measles catch-up campaign will run from April through June 2019, with a goal to immunize as many students (K-12) as possible before the end of the school year. See the March 20th news release from the Ministry of Health for additional information.

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2019HLTH0046-000442>

Northern Health's Primary and Community Care teams will be contacting schools to coordinate catch-up clinics.

In some communities, the use of clinic space within schools may be requested during or outside of school hours. These arrangements will be made in collaboration between school leadership and Primary and Community Care staff. Additionally, some health centres may also offer appointments for catch-up measles immunizations.

In addition to announcing the catch-up campaign for measles immunization in the March 20<sup>th</sup> news release, the Minister of Health also introduced the next step in improving immunization rates across B.C. – mandatory reporting of school-age children's vaccination status. This initiative is expected to be implemented in the fall and more details will be shared at a later date.

### **Important Information RE: Action Required by Schools and Immunization Records**

Schools are being asked to send an attached letter to all parents, via their routine communication methods, which describes the catch-up program and provides associated information to parents. An additional letter is provided specifically for parents of home schooled children that school districts are being asked to send. Northern Health recommends sending these letters by April 5<sup>th</sup>.

Northern Health is reviewing immunization records to identify those children who may not be up to date with their measles immunizations. Similar to current process, schools will be provided with student-specific packages, to be sent home to parents.

Student records are currently being updated in the Public Health database for those attending public schools (as well as some independent schools) using the Student Information Exchange (STIX) interface.

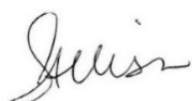
Independent schools not currently sharing student information electronically through STIX will be required to provide class lists for all grades outside of the routine school program. These independent schools are requested to provide the following student information when contacted by the school Primary Care Nurse:

- Legal Name
- Date of Birth
- Gender
- Student's Personal Health Number
- Current student address and telephone number
- Parent name and contact information


Schools are reminded that the provision of Mature Minor Consent (MMC) has been included under the Infants Act. MMC stipulates that a youth who demonstrates an understanding of the benefits and risks of a health service can consent or refuse that service **independent of a parent or representative**. As such, Primary Care Nurses will give grades 9 to 12 students who present without parental consent the option to consent to immunization as a mature minor. MMC will **not** be offered to students in kindergarten to grade 8.

Please contact your local Primary Care Nurse or Primary and Community Care team if you require additional information.

Sincerely,



Dr. Sandra Allison, MPH  
CCFP FRCPC  
Chief Medical Health Officer  
**Northern Health**



Dr. Rakel Kling, MSc MPH  
FRCPC  
Medical Health Officer,  
Northwest HSDA  
**Northern Health**



Dr. Andrew Gray, MSc  
FRCPC  
Medical Health Officer,  
Northern Interior HSDA  
**Northern Health**



Dr. Jong Kim, MSc, FRCPC  
Medical Health Officer,  
Northeast HSDA  
**Northern Health**

April 5, 2019

Dear Parents, Guardians or Representatives, of Home Schooled Children,

**RE: BC Government's Measles Immunization Catch-Up Program for School-Aged Children (K-12) from April to June 2019**

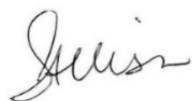
As you may have heard, the BC Government has announced an initiative to catch up all school-age children (K-12) with measles vaccines. This is an opportunity for unimmunized and under-immunized children to catch-up on their measles vaccinations. At this time, there is no measles outbreak within our Northern Health region; however, we are working with the province, our health-care partners and school districts to increase immunity amongst B.C.'s school-age children.

Most people in Canada are protected against measles infection through immunizations. Two doses of either measles, mumps and rubella vaccine (MMR) or measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella vaccine (MMRV) is 99 per cent effective at preventing measles. Further booster doses are unnecessary and do not increase immunity. Children typically receive one dose of MMR at 12 months of age followed by one dose of MMRV starting at four years of age. For more information on measles and measles containing vaccine, please visit: Health Link BC - Measles at <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-feature/measles>

If you believe your child or children may be unimmunized or under immunized with respect to MMR or MMRV vaccine based on their immunization records, please contact your local health unit listed below to book an appointment.

Thank you for your attention to this information. We look forward to working together to ensure the measles immunization catch-up program for school-age children is successful.

Sincerely,



Dr. Sandra Allison, MPH  
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Chief Medical Health Officer  
**Northern Health**



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**Northeast Health Units**

Fort St John.....250-263-6000  
 Chetwynd.....250-788-7300

Dawson Creek.....250-719-6500  
 Hudson's Hope.....250-783-9991

Fort Nelson..... 250-774-7092  
 Tumbler Ridge...250-242-5271

**Northwest Health Units**

Houston.....250-845-2294  
 Atlin Health Centre 250-651-7677  
 Hazelton.....250-842-4640  
 Smithers.....250-847-6400

Dease Lake.....250-771-4444  
 Kitimat.....250-632-3181  
 Masset.....250-626-4725  
 Stewart.....250-636-2221

Prince Rupert.....250-622-6380  
 Queen Charlotte..250-559-4933  
 Sandspit.....250-637-5403  
 Terrace.....250-631-4200

**Northern Interior Health Units**

Mackenzie.....250-997-8517  
 Quesnel.....250-991-7571  
 Burns Lake.....250-692-2460

Fort St. James.....250-996-7178  
 McBride.....250-569-2251 ext 2026  
 Valemount..250-566-9138 ext 2000

Fraser Lake.....250-699-8960  
 Prince George.....250-565-7478  
 Vanderhoof.....250-567-6900

April 5, 2019

Dear Parents, Guardians or Representatives,

**RE: BC Government's Measles Immunization Catch-Up Program for School-Aged Children (K-12) from April to June 2019**

As you may have heard, the BC Government has announced an initiative to catch up all school-age children (K-12) with measles vaccines. This is an opportunity for unimmunized and under-immunized children to catch-up on their measles vaccinations. At this time, there is no measles outbreak within our Northern Health region; however, we are working with the province, our health-care partners and school districts to increase immunity amongst B.C.'s school-age children.

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Starting in April, Northern Health will be distributing immunization consent packages, through schools, directly to students in kindergarten through Grade 12 who are not up to date with their vaccinations. Please return the completed package to your school within one week of receiving it.

**Students who are unimmunized or under-immunized with respect to MMR or MMRV vaccine based on public health immunization records, will receive an immunization consent package.**

The consent package will include a letter which provides instructions on how to complete the immunization consent form. If your child received an immunization consent package, but has documented measles vaccine elsewhere, please include this information on the immunization consent form in the space provided. If your child is fully vaccinated with two doses, they will not require further booster vaccinations.

Students who are considered to be up-to-date according to Northern Health's immunization records will receive a package containing information only.

If you do not receive a consent and/or information package for your child/children by May 2019 and believe that they are not up-to-date with their immunizations, please contact your local health unit listed below.

Arrangements for the provision of immunizations are being coordinated within each Northern Health community. More information is forthcoming that will outline school specific plans and/or clinics where you can have your child/children immunized in your community.

Thank you for your attention to this information. We look forward to working together to ensure the measles immunization catch-up program for school-age children is successful.

Sincerely,



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