

Important information for all GP teams, Community Pharmacists, Community Nursing and Aged Care Facilities – Please share this with everyone in your team

Current Situation

- The measles outbreak in Canterbury continues. Currently there are 36 confirmed cases and a further 10 cases are under investigation.
- We understand that practices have been under significant pressure with the events of 15 March, and the volume of work this measles outbreak has generated.
- Based on NIR data, just over 14,500 MMR vaccinations have been delivered across Canterbury throughout March. However we are aware there are about 4,500 vaccinations that have been administered without opting the patient onto NIR.
- Most practices are finding that they now have fewer patients in the first 5 priority groups (as per insert below) attending for vaccination.

Community immunity prior to the outbreak

- Canterbury has relatively high MMR coverage, with 93% of 2 and 4 year olds fully vaccinated for their age.
- Those who have had two MMR vaccinations (typically given at 15months and 4 years) are immune from measles.
- People born between 1969 and 1990 are considered to have a good level of protection. This group were offered one measles vaccine and evidence suggests that one dose of measles vaccine protects 95% of people from developing measles.
- People born before 1969 will likely have been exposed to the measles virus and will have acquired immunity.

Rationale for the next steps

A number of factors have been taken into consideration to determine appropriate next steps for the Canterbury MMR strategy, including:

- Advice from primary care
- Existing community immunity prior to the outbreak
- The evolving epidemiology of the outbreak - of the confirmed cases, the majority are 28 years and under
- Canterbury MMR uptake from 4 to 24 March – this shows good uptake in under 5yrs, and lower uptake in the 5-28 age group

Recommendations Going Forward

- CDHB have planned a further four week MMR vaccination campaign from 28 March to 26 April targeting first MMR (for those who have had none) **and** second MMR (for those who have had one) for:
 - All those aged 12 mths to 28yrs
 - Caregivers of infants aged up to 12 months
 - Those aged between 29 and 50 who work with children (teachers or healthcare workers)
- CDHB have provided more details on the rationale and outline of the campaign, including the supporting communications activities (for example, encouraging students to get vaccinated prior to school holidays) **as attached**. They will monitor uptake and once practices have used existing stock, will distribute further MMR over the four week period based on uptake data.

- Based on MMR uptake over the last few weeks and our populations in these groups needing vaccination, CDHB believe there is enough stock of MMR to support this campaign over the next four weeks, including meeting the routine immunisation schedule. When you need to order more vaccines please email your own immunisation coordinator by 3pm each day, to either jayne@canterburyimms.co.nz or immunisation@pegasus.org.nz
- **Please remember to record all vaccines delivered on NIR** as well as making an immunisation claim. Immunisation coordinators will provide advice on how to load these correctly.
- Infection prevention and control of measles cases in general practice is attached.
- Information about serology is being developed and will be available in the near future.

Kind regards,

Dr Phil Schroeder, Dr Kim Burgess

Canterbury Primary Response Group

www.primaryhealthresponse.org.nz

Priority 1: Children aged 12 months to 13 years who have never been vaccinated.

Priority 2: Children and adults aged 14 years to 28 years who have never been vaccinated.

Priority 3: Ring-fencing children who cannot be vaccinated, such as the very young or for whom vaccination is contra-indicated. *(This means caregivers and close contacts of children aged less than 12 months or those who cannot be vaccinated. This needs to be determined on a case by case basis. This should include ensuring 2 doses of MMR have been given as we need very high levels of protection for these very vulnerable children. Refer to the Immunisation Handbook for additional advice.)*

Priority 4: Continue with the routine immunisation programme. *(Where the 15 month vaccine is given between 12 and 15 months, please reschedule the second dose at 4 years as per the Schedule)*

Priority 5: Occupational groups aged under 50 who have frequent contact with children such as EEC, primary and secondary school teachers; residential care managers, healthcare workers etc., who have never been vaccinated.