



An Oifig Náisiúnta Chosaint Sláinte
Ionad Faireachais um Chosaint Sláinte
25 - 27 Sráid Ghairdinéir
Baile Átha Cliath
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National Health Protection Office
Health Protection Surveillance Centre HPSC
25-27 Middle Gardiner Street
Dublin 1
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Ireland

08th August 2024
Ref No:DNHP0382

Dear Colleagues,

Re: Protecting healthcare staff from measles- call to action in August 2024

The National Health Protection Office (NHPO) are advising about the **ongoing threat from measles infection to our healthcare workers**. Since the start of 2024, there has been a significant increase in measles notifications in Ireland (in line with the experience in the UK and wider European countries). To date this year there have been **81 confirmed cases notified**. Many cases have presented to healthcare settings with **over half of confirmed cases being seen in hospital (ED, outpatient, or inpatient)**. To date, there have been documented infections acquired in hospital settings and at least one outbreak in a hospital involving two healthcare staff so far, both unvaccinated.

We anticipate an increase in measles towards the end of August/beginning of September due to people returning from travel to higher risk areas (which includes most of Europe) and schools reopening leading to increased social mixing and amplification of infection in children. Further, in July we saw the changeover of NCHD staff, and we know there are potential increases in other new healthcare workers (including temporary or agency staff) consequent to the ending of previous HSE recruitment freeze. These staff may not be familiar with the **measles alert communications issued previously (attached)** and **may not have received two MMR vaccines or be aware of their status** (immune due to previous infection or vaccination).

The NHPO advise that:

- **It is extremely important that all staff are aware of their measles immunity status (either through vaccination or previous infection).**
- **Non-immune staff should be strongly encouraged and supported to receive two doses of the MMR vaccine to ensure their protection and protect their patients:**
 - **GPs** are still offering MMR vaccine free of charge so staff can book appointments directly.
 - **CHO vaccination teams** can support **provision of MMR vaccination clinics in hospitals and healthcare settings during August**, so we would urge hospitals to work with them urgently to provide protection to their staff.
- There is a need for continued reminders required for staff to **“Think measles”** – being aware of the signs and symptoms and promptly isolating any suspected cases (as per the advice in the **attached leaflet**).



We thank you for your continued cooperation in the control of this important health protection issue.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Éamonn O'Moore".

Dr Éamonn O'Moore,
Director of Health Protection,
HSE Public Health: Health Protection
IMC No 015507

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