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May 28, 2019

Dear Superintendents and Principals:

Re: BC School Age Measles Catch-up Program

In April, the Ministries of Health and Education launched a measles immunization catch-up program to help B.C. families ensure their children are protected from measles. The program has been running from April through June 2019, with a goal of immunizing as many of the under immunized school aged children as possible by the end of the school year.

The catch-up program is phase one of the government's two-phase plan to increase immunization rates for all vaccine-preventable diseases, educate the public about the importance of immunization, and increase awareness of their immunization status. Phase two – mandatory reporting of students' immunization status – will begin in B.C. schools in September 2019, with details announced in the near future.

Island Health Public Health Nurses will be or have been in contact with your school this spring to book clinic dates, distribute consents/information to parents and guardians of children who are unimmunized or under immunized AND distribute records of immunization to all students.

In anticipation of the mandatory reporting requirement this fall 2019, Island Health Public Health is providing a paper record of immunization for all students and their families concurrently with the catch-up immunization activities occurring in schools. We appreciate the cooperation of schools to distribute these records and consents directly to students/families.

A record of immunization for every student will benefit all families who will need to provide this information for the fall and may not have a current record. Distributing immunization records to all students also maintains confidentiality about health status because all students will receive information about immunization, not only students who may be underimmunized or who do not have complete records.

Most eligible children in kindergarten to grade 4 will attend clinics at their local Public Health office. Where there are a large number of kindergartens to grade 4 students requiring immunization the PHN may arrange a clinic to immunize in schools. If parents/guardians have questions about immunization, or the measles catch up campaign specifically, please have them contact their local public health unit directly.

Additional Information:

- HealthLinkBC file on Measles, Mumps, Rubella vaccine can be found at <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthlinkbc-files/measles-mumps-rubella-vaccine>
- HealthLinkBC file on mature minor consent and immunizations can be found at <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthlinkbc-files/infants-act-mature-minor-consent-and-immunization>

Thank you for supporting the health and wellbeing of your student population through this collective effort. We look forward to continuing to work with your students and staff to promote good health through our immunization and other public health programs.

Yours in health,

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