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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rubella Outbreak Declared in Maricopa County, Arizona – Immunizations Encouraged for Residents of Clark County

(Las Vegas, Nev. – June 1, 1999) – The Clark County Health District (CCHD) reports that a rubella (German measles) outbreak has been confirmed in Maricopa County, which is located in the neighboring state of Arizona. Among the confirmed cases in the county is an instance of Congenital Rubella Syndrome (CRS). Cases have also been reported in Yuma and Mojave Counties. Clark County has had one confirmed case of the disease in 1999, which was reported by the Health District on April 26.

“With the large number of tourists from all over the world who come to Nevada, our population will continue to be challenged with preventable diseases such as rubella,” says Dr. Kwalick, chief health officer for Clark County. “ Our goal is to have zero cases of vaccine-preventable disease in the county, through maintaining high levels of immunizations.

In young children, the first evidence of disease is usually the appearance of a rash which appears first on the face and then may spread to the entire body within 24 hours. In adolescents and adults the following symptoms may proceed the rash by one to five days: headache, swollen lymph nodes, joint pain, runny nose, red eyes and a low-grade fever. Rubella can be spread through coughing, sneezing, or direct contact with the urine of a baby

(more)

with CRS. CRS is a condition found in children whose mothers were infected with the disease during the early stages of pregnancy.

Early childhood immunization levels for measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) are at an all time high in the United States, but many older children and adults are not adequately protected. Recent immigrants from Mexico are particularly at risk, as outbreaks are currently occurring in Mexico, where the population is under-immunized for the disease.

For questions regarding immunizations, contact the CCHD Immunization Department at (702) 383-1357. To report a suspected case of rubella, contact the CCHD Office of Epidemiology at (702) 383-1378. Residents outside of Clark County should contact the Nevada State Health Division at (775) 684-5900.

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Clark County Health District

RUBELLA FACT SHEET

Rubella

- Rubella, also known as German measles, is a highly contagious disease that is caused by a virus.
- The disease can be spread through coughing, sneezing, or through direct contact with the urine of a baby with Congenital Rubella Syndrome (CRS).

What are the symptoms of rubella?

- Symptoms can include headache, swollen lymph nodes, joint pain, runny nose, red eyes, and a rash and low-grade fever that are present for two to three days.
- Those with rubella are most contagious seven days before and at least four days after the onset of a rash.
- Rubella can be less severe in children than in adults and may be present without symptoms. Only about half of the people who have the disease get rashes.
- In most cases, symptoms appear within 16-18 days.

About the vaccine . . .

- There is a safe and effective vaccine available that protects against rubella. The vaccine is a combination injection that helps protect against measles, mumps and rubella (MMR).
- Adolescents and adults who have not had rubella and have not been vaccinated are susceptible to the disease.
- Vaccinations are particularly recommended for: health care workers; college and university students; women of childbearing age; child care workers such as teachers and day care personnel; international travelers; and those born after 1956 who have no proof of immunity.
- Rubella cannot be contracted from the vaccine.
- The most common side effect of the vaccine is burning or stinging at the injection site. Other side effects include fever, rash, headache and general weakness.
- There is a very small risk for serious complications after getting the vaccine. However, the risks associated with contracting the disease are much greater than the risks from the vaccine.

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Congenital Rubella Syndrome (CRS)

- Rubella is generally a mild illness, however, it has serious consequence for women who become infected during the early states of pregnancy. Infection during the first trimester carries with it a great risk that the child will be born with CRS, a condition that can lead to serious birth defects such as deafness, cataracts, glaucoma, heart defects, developmental delays, bone defects and liver and spleen damage.
- Up to 90 percent of infants born to mothers infected with rubella in the first trimester will develop CRS.
- Rubella may cause miscarriage or stillbirth.
- Approximately 10 percent of pregnant women are not immune to rubella.
- Infants with the virus may be contagious for extended periods of time.