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To: School Health and School Nurses  
Local Boards of Health  
Exchange and Visiting Student Program Administrators  
School Administrators  
Healthcare Providers

From: Susan Lett, MD, MPH, Medical Director  
Immunization Program

Date: June 5, 2015

Subject: Immunization Requirements Apply to International Students at All Grade Levels

Measles is a highly contagious, potentially very serious illness which continues to occur in the U.S. largely due to importation. In 2015 there has been a large outbreak associated with the Disney theme park in California, with 117 confirmed cases, mostly likely initiated by a visitor to the US with measles or a returning traveler who contracted the illness while out of the country.

The recent confirmation of a case of measles in Massachusetts in a visiting unvaccinated exchange student from Western Europe, and associated exposure of over 700 people, highlight the importance of **immunization requirements for students, including exchange students and visiting students**. This particular exchange student became infectious with measles very shortly after arriving in the United States. There do not appear to have been any secondary cases as the result of this imported case. However, a number of exposed individuals were quarantined for 21 days, resulting in missed days of work, exclusion from daycare, cancellation of plans to attend important events, and stress for those exposed who had pre-existing health concerns.

Please ensure that pertinent individuals in administrative offices and health sections within your institution or town are aware of the immunization requirements. Please work together to make them a formal part of any international exchange program or academic visitation program in your jurisdiction, at public and private schools at all grade levels including high schools and post-secondary institutions.

Massachusetts regulations specify the immunizations required of students before admission to school ([105 CMR 220.000](#): IMMUNIZATION OF STUDENTS BEFORE ADMISSION TO SCHOOL). These regulations include "any individual from another country attending or visiting classes or educational programs as part of a formal academic visitation or exchange program."

Student shall mean any individual attending, or enrolled or registered to attend, a pre-school program as defined in 105 CMR 220.400, kindergarten through 12th grade in a public or private school, or a postsecondary institution, as defined in 105 CMR 220.600, provided the educational program is offered either on or off-site in Massachusetts. The term student shall also include any individual from another country attending or visiting classes or educational programs as part of a formal academic visitation or exchange program.

**These regulations apply to all such visiting students, even if their program is for a short duration.**

For questions about vaccine preventable diseases, please call the Division of Epidemiology and Immunization at 617-983-6800, and ask to speak to an epidemiologist.

- More information about school requirements and vaccination can be found at <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/id/immunization/school-requirements.html>.
- Our most recent Clinical Measles Alert (April 30, 2015) can be found at <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/cdc/advisories/mdph-clinical-measles-alert-4-30-2015.pdf>

Please forward this memo to pertinent colleagues in your staff, institution, and municipality.