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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **16 measles cases now confirmed in Grant County**

Additional exposure sites identified by investigators.

GRANT COUNTY, WA – The Grant County Health District has confirmed a new case of measles, making a total of 16 cases of measles in Grant County, all residents of Moses Lake. All cases have occurred in unvaccinated individuals.

A children’s group at the “Say Yes Lord Ministries” Bible study, which meets on Wednesday nights at Chief Moses Middle School has been identified as a site where recent exposures have occurred. Public Health officials are working with the exposed families to assure they have access to the MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella) vaccine.

Public health activities during the outbreak include tracking of cases, to identify possible sources and other people who may have been exposed to the measles so that preventive measures can be taken. Vaccination protects individuals from getting the measles and therefore helps to prevent the spread of this disease which can be very serious. It is estimated that one in every 5 or 6 individuals who gets the measles has to be hospitalized for complications. Globally, measles is still one of the biggest killers of children.

Grant County Health District staff and Region 7 Public Health Epidemiologist are working with health care providers and facilities to assure necessary precautions are in place for patients with rash like illnesses entering the facilities. Healthcare facilities are also examining the status of their own staff so that measures can be taken to assure that those caring for patients are not going to get the measles and transmit it to other patients.

The Health District has requested that Grant County schools, child cares and preschools review their student immunization records and strongly recommends that staff and students who are not fully vaccinated with the recommended 2 doses of MMR get immunized as soon as possible.

*“I personally want to thank the community for their cooperation during this outbreak. We can only beat this by working together,” Dr. Alexander Brzezny, Grant County Health Officer*

“We have pulled most of our staff from their routine work to assist with the outbreak response. They are working very hard and doing an amazing job; the presence of our regional epidemiologist, Jackie Dawson, has been critical to our investigation efforts,” says Peggy Grigg, Administrator/Personal Health Director for the Grant County Health District. “As we are still seeing new cases, we ask that the public check their immunization records to make sure everyone in your family is up-to-date on ALL their immunizations. Also, if you are showing symptoms of a rash-like illness, contact your health care provider to set up an appointment to be evaluated.” **Do not show up at a healthcare facility or doctor’s office without calling ahead.** Measles can be easily transmitted through the air in many indoor settings.

Measles ([www.doh.wa.gov/EHSPHL/factsheet/measles.htm](http://www.doh.wa.gov/EHSPHL/factsheet/measles.htm)) spreads very easily through coughing and sneezing. A person with measles can spread the disease from four days before to four days after the day the rash starts. Symptoms of measles may include a high fever, cold-like symptoms, and a rash. It may also cause more serious problems like pneumonia.

#### **MMR (Measles Vaccine) Immunization Recommendations**

- Any child 12 months age or older who has not previously been immunized should receive the first dose.
- It is routinely recommended that children receive a second dose of MMR between ages four to six years; during exposure and outbreak situations, the second dose can be given at any time as long as it is 4 weeks after the first. Having 2 doses of MMR vaccine is the best way to assure that you and your family child are immune to measles.
- Both doses must be given on or after the first birthday and at least 4 weeks apart.