

SULLIVAN COUNTY BUREAU OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

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EMS Information Bulletin 2019-01

DATE: June 7, 2019

SUBJECT: Measles Guidance for EMS Providers

TO: Sullivan County EMS Agencies

FROM: Alex Rau, EMS Coordinator
Nancy McGraw, Sullivan County Public Health Director

The Sullivan County Public Health Department recently released a public health advisory regarding the possible exposure of individuals who recently tested positive for measles. As of today, Sullivan County has had (6) confirmed cases of measles in 2019.

We are facing the probability of continued measles cases, heightened by the upcoming summer season which brings an influx of residents and tourists into Sullivan County.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) providers and other first responders are at the front line of medical care and have a **high risk of exposure** to patients with known or unknown infectious diseases or germs.

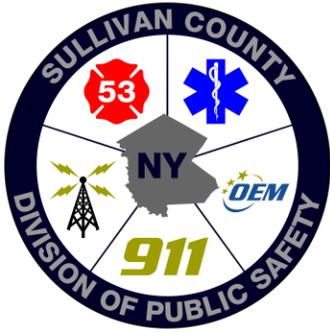
Therefore, all EMS Agencies and first response personnel should perform a review of current infection control policies and procedures and reinforce routine infection prevention practices including standard precautions. Please review the following guidelines:

1. Vaccination

All EMS providers should have documented evidence of immunity to measles. EMS Agencies should review their current policies regarding documentation of immunity for staff, including volunteers. This information should be documented and readily available at the work location.

2. Protective Equipment and Procedures

All EMS Providers should use standard precautions during all patient encounters. Measles is a highly contagious viral infection spread through the airborne route so to minimize the risk, the following is recommended:



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- Only those who are known to be immune should approach patients who may have measles;
- First responders should wear particulate respirators (e.g. N-95). Please note that particulate respirators should only be used as part of a comprehensive respiratory protection program that includes appropriate screening, training and fit-testing; and
- Patients should wear a surgical mask, if not medically contraindicated.

3. Notification to Receiving Facility

Receiving facilities must be notified **BEFORE** a known or suspected measles patient arrives, so appropriate infection prevention procedures can be implemented. EMS Agencies should not bring patients with confirmed or suspected measles exposure into the ER without prior instructions from the receiving facility.

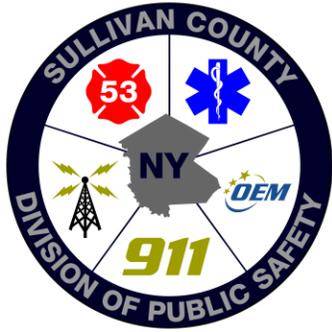
4. Transportation

Because measles virus can contaminate surfaces or hang in the air for up to two hours, ambulances and transport vehicles should be taken out of service for a minimum of two hours after transporting a patient with known or suspected measles. Routine cleaning of the transport vehicle should be done.

5. Report and Evaluation of Exposure

EMS Providers who are potentially exposed to measles should consult with health care and public health professionals. Health care personnel should evaluate risk and recommend and/or provide appropriate post-exposure prophylaxis when indicated (i.e., one dose of MMR within 72 hours of exposure for EMS Providers with no proof of immunity). In consultation with public health authorities, EMS Providers who are exposed and do not have proof of immunity may need to be ineligible to work.

Personnel who develop symptoms consistent with measles, including fever, runny nose, cough, "pink eye," and followed by a rash that spreads over the body should seek medical attention (calling ahead before going to the medical facility so proper precautions can be taken to reduce potential exposure). All suspected cases of measles must be reported immediately to the Sullivan County Public Health Department at (845)292-5910.



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Resources:

2007 Guideline for Isolation Precautions: Preventing Transmission of Infectious Agents in Healthcare Settings

<https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/isolation/index.html>

Immunization of Health-Care Personnel:

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/rr/rr6007.pdf>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention general measles information:

<http://www.cdc.gov/measles/index.html>

NYS DOH Measles Review For Providers

https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/2170/docs/2018-11_presentation_for_providers.pdf