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News Release

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Measles Symptoms? Call First!

SOUTHWEST UTAH – The Southwest Utah Public Health Department (SWUPHD) is urging residents to call healthcare providers and hospitals before showing up in person if they think they might have the measles. The district (including Washington, Iron, Beaver, Kane, and Garfield counties) has now seen over 100 cases of measles since August of this year.

“Measles is a very contagious airborne disease”, says Dr. David Blodgett, SWUPHD Director and Health Officer. “If you have symptoms, please call ahead before going to a clinic or hospital so they can take precautions. You don’t want to expose vulnerable people who might have serious complications if they get infected.”

Symptoms start 7-14 days after exposure and include high fever, cough, runny nose, watery eyes, and a rash that starts on the face before spreading to the rest of the body. While most people recover at home, some people - especially children - can experience complications like breathing problems, pneumonia, brain swelling, seizures, and even death. People with compromised immune systems are especially at risk.

Measles is 97% preventable by vaccination. Almost all of Southwest Utah’s cases have been in unvaccinated individuals, and most have been children under the age of 18. Several people have been hospitalized due to measles infection, some with serious illness.

Unimmunized people may have been exposed to measles locally at schools, healthcare facilities, stores, restaurants, and gas stations. To view measles cases and exposure locations in Utah, or to schedule a vaccination appointment, visit swuhealth.gov/measles.

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The mission of the Southwest Utah Public Health Department is to protect the community’s health through the promotion of wellness and the prevention of disease. Visit our website at www.swuhealth.gov.