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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 4, 2015

On June 4, Taney County Health Department (TCHD) officials received test results which confirmed the presence of measles illness in the individual identified.

The TCHD was notified Sunday, May 31, 2015 an individual presented to the Cox Medical Center Branson Emergency Department with symptoms and history consistent with measles. Preliminary test results were negative for the presence of measles. However, further testing confirmed the illness.

“Only one case of measles has been confirmed and is no longer contagious,” stated Taney County Health Department Director Robert Niezgoda. “This indication of measles will not alter the course of our current response. We have identified close contacts and ancillary contacts to verify vaccination status and provide vaccinations if needed.” This positive test result will move the response into another phase of identifying those remaining local contacts who could not be reached within 72 hours to provide MMR vaccinations. These individuals will be offered another measure that will provide protection.

The Taney County Health Department followed investigative protocol in coordination with the Stone County Health Department. The health departments have identified contacts and verified vaccination status for each individual, with guidance from the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services. Any contact who could not verify a vaccination history for measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) were given the vaccine.

The Springfield-Greene County Health Department is working with the Springfield-Branson National Airport regarding any potential measles exposures that occurred. In addition, passengers who shared the Friday flight with the measles case are being contacted and evaluated by Health Department staff.

Measles is a respiratory illness caused by a virus which is spread from person-to-person through droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Symptoms include fever, runny nose, cough, and a rash. Persons with measles are considered contagious from 4 days before until 4 days after the rash appears.

Most people have received the measles mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine as a child, which provides protection against the disease. The MMR vaccine is safe and effective. It protects against measles, mumps and rubella and is found to be 97% effective. Oppositely, 9 out of 10 unvaccinated individuals exposed to measles will become ill. Of those individuals who contract measles, 25% will require hospitalization.

For more information about measles contact your primary care provider or visit the Taney County Health Department website at www.taneycohealth.org or call the Branson office at 417-334-4544 or Forsyth office at 417-546-4725.

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