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**DE BLASIO ADMINISTRATION'S HEALTH DEPARTMENT DECLARES PUBLIC
HEALTH EMERGENCY DUE TO MEASLES CRISIS**

Following declaration, City orders mandatory vaccinations for all people in Williamsburg

NEW YORK—The de Blasio Administration today declared a [public health emergency](#) in select zip codes in Williamsburg, following a measles outbreak affecting the Orthodox Jewish community. As part of the declaration, unvaccinated individuals living in those ZIP codes who may have been exposed to measles will be required to receive the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine in order to protect others in the community and help curtail the ongoing outbreak.

Under the mandatory vaccinations, members of the City's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene will check the vaccination records of any individual who may have been in contact with infected patients. Those who have not received the MMR vaccine or do not have evidence of immunity may be given a violation and could be fined \$1,000.

"There's no question that vaccines are safe, effective and life-saving," said **Mayor de Blasio**. "I urge everyone, especially those in affected areas, to get their MMR vaccines to protect their children, families and communities."

"Measles is a dangerous, potentially deadly disease that can easily be prevented with vaccine," said **Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Dr. Herminia Palacio**. "When people choose not to get their children vaccinated, they are putting their children and others – such as pregnant women, people on chemotherapy, and the elderly – at risk of contracting measles. The City has worked aggressively to end this outbreak, and today's declaration of a public health emergency and new vaccine mandate, in combination with the blanket Commissioner's Orders for yeshivas, ensures we are using every tool to protect New Yorkers."

“As a pediatrician, I know the MMR vaccine is safe and effective. This outbreak is being fueled by a small group of anti-vaxxers in these neighborhoods. They have been spreading dangerous misinformation based on fake science,” said **Health Commissioner Dr. Oxiris Barbot**. “We stand with the majority of people in this community who have worked hard to protect their children and those at risk. We’ve seen a large increase in the number of people vaccinated in these neighborhoods, but as Passover approaches, we need to do all we can to ensure more people get the vaccine.”

This public health emergency declaration comes after the NYC Health Department issued Commissioner's Orders last week to all yeshivas and day care programs serving the Orthodox Jewish community in Williamsburg, doubling down on their order to exclude unvaccinated students or face violations and possible closure, first announced in December. Now any school out of compliance will immediately be issued a violation and could be subject to closure.

To date, 285 cases have been confirmed since the beginning of the outbreak in October, with many of these new cases being confirmed in the last two months. The vast majority of cases are children under 18 years of age (246 cases), and 39 cases are adults. Most of these measles cases were unvaccinated or incompletely vaccinated individuals. There have been no deaths associated with this outbreak, although there have been complications, including 21 hospitalizations and five admissions to the intensive care unit.

Measles is a highly contagious disease and can cause severe complications such as pneumonia, encephalitis (swelling of the brain), and death. Measles is easily preventable with the safe and effective MMR vaccine. Newborns, pregnant individuals, and those with weakened immune systems cannot get vaccinated, so it is important that everyone around them be vaccinated in order to protect them from contracting the virus and prevent severe complications in these susceptible populations.

While the MMR vaccine is the safest and most effective method of prevent measles, it is only 97 percent effective, so population-wide immunity is a key component to protecting our most at risk New Yorkers from measles. Pregnant women — even if they have received the MMR vaccine — are still at risk of complications including birth defects or loss of pregnancy.

In February, the Department expanded vaccination recommendations for providers serving the Orthodox Jewish community to include an early, extra dose of the MMR vaccine for children between the ages of 6 months to 11 months who live in Williamsburg and Borough Park.

Precautions New Yorkers Should Take

- Measles can be prevented through vaccinations. New Yorkers should call 311 to access a list of facilities that can provide MMR at low or no cost.
- There are large outbreaks of measles in Europe and Israel, as well as in countries in South America, Africa, and Asia. New Yorkers should make sure they have been vaccinated with MMR vaccine before traveling to Europe or Israel. Infants ages 6 to 11 months should also be vaccinated prior to international travel.

- New Yorkers who believe they were exposed to measles or who have symptoms of measles should contact their health care provider before seeking care to prevent exposure to other patients.
- For more information, New Yorkers can visit the Health Department's [Measles](#) page.