



health

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MEDIA RELEASE

To: All Media Houses

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NORTH WEST HEALTH CONFIRMS CASES OF MEASLES OUTBREAK IN THE NGAKA MODIRI MOLEMA DISTRICT

The North West Department of Health confirms the outbreak of Measles in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District today, 05 December 2022. The Centre for Vaccines & Immunology (CVI) and National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) notified the Department of 3 laboratory confirmed measles cases with 1 equivocal case. The specimens were collected at Lonely Park clinic in Mahikeng sub-district.

Measles is a highly infectious notifiable viral disease. Measles commonly presents with high fever, a general feeling of unwellness, coughing, a runny nose and teary eyes two to three days before a typical rash appears. Although there is no rash at the onset of the fever and flu-like symptoms, the patient is highly contagious during this time before the rash appears. A non-productive cough is usually present throughout the feverish period, persisting for one to two weeks in uncomplicated cases, often being the last symptom to disappear. Swelling of the glands commonly occurs in young children. Older children usually complain of sensitivity to light and joint pains. Koplik's spots (small spots with white or bluish-white centres resembling "grains of salt sprinkled on a red background") may be seen on the insides of the cheeks in over 80% of cases before the onset of the rash. A blotchy red rash usually appears behind the ears and on the face within two to four days after the pre-rash feverish period. The rash peaks in two to three days and becomes most

concentrated on the trunk and upper extremities. It lasts from three to seven days. Malnourished or vitamin-deficient children may develop severe skin exfoliation.

Complications may include middle-ear infection, blindness, diarrhoea, dehydration, respiratory infections, pneumonia, neurological complications such as convulsions, and even death. The highest death rates occur in infants 6 to 11 months of age. These rates may underestimate the true lethality of measles because of incomplete reporting of the outcomes of measles illness, such as delayed deaths related to chronic diarrhoea. In certain high-risk populations case fatality rates as high as 20% or 30% have been reported in infants younger than 1 year old. Measles can also cause severe illness in children, and also in adults. One positive case of measles may quickly spread to up to 17 unprotected/unimmunised cases in a short period of time. Because measles so easily spreads among groups of people, especially in schools and crèches, it is absolutely important to protect groups of children/people by immunisation/ vaccination with a safe measles vaccine.

The tracing is underway for patients whose address indicates who are suspected to be residing in Signal Hill. The Province will continue to monitor the development through the online dashboard. The Provincial measles vaccination coverage is 79.4% (measles under 1 dose) and 82.3% (measles 2nd dose) respectively.

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