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To All Concerned About Oklahoma’s Children:

More than 1,000 measles cases have been reported throughout our country. Measles is a highly contagious disease that can spread quickly and have serious health outcomes for patients of all ages. Unfortunately, many children have not received recommended vaccines that are safe and provide much-needed protection from very serious and sometimes deadly diseases such as measles.

With this in mind, Oklahoma’s public health officials issued a memo this month, urging school officials to encourage parents and caregivers to ensure every child is up to date with all Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)-recommended immunizations, including the vaccine that protects against measles.

As chair of the Oklahoma Alliance for Healthy Families, I join in asking you to address this important issue, which directly correlates with children’s health and well-being.

Measles is a vaccine-preventable illness, and the CDC reports 97% protection with two doses of the MMR immunization. One of the most contagious illnesses, nine out of 10 unvaccinated people will get sick if they share space with a person who has measles or has been in that space for the previous two hours. Unimmunized children top the list of patients who have contracted measles, and they currently make up 68% of measles-related hospitalizations. Side effects from measles can include pneumonia and brain swelling, which can even lead to death. Unfortunately two unvaccinated, school-age children have died.

Please help protect your district’s students and your staff by sharing this information in the communications channels available to you. The toolkit includes a one-page flyer and social media content that has been vetted by physicians. We are also including suggested email language, which can be adapted for your school. The materials are free and available for your use. We hope you will.

Wishing you all a safe and healthy end of the school year and a wonderful summer break.

Dr. Steven Crawford, Chair

Oklahoma Alliance for Healthy Families