



# Measles Immunization Catch-up Program

July 2019

July 25, 2019

Dear British Columbians,

In April, we launched the [measles immunization catch-up program](#) to increase protection against measles for B.C. school aged children amidst a global outbreak. As of July 10, 2019, the Government of Canada has issued a [global measles notice](#) advising that anyone who is not protected against measles is at risk of being infected when traveling internationally. It is important for families to immunize ahead of any vacations to avoid falling ill. As a tourist destination and transportation hub, British Columbians who are under- or unimmunized are also at risk for exposure to measles from visitors.

When we launched the catch-up program, we committed to providing monthly reports. This report, as it includes June, provides an update of the three-month program. We are able to report out that we have made some clear progress in improving immunization levels, both through providing thousands of immunizations, and in learning that thousands of children are already immunized. Since we launched the program in April, 590,748 students' immunization records have been reviewed and notifications have been sent to parents/guardians of children who have missing or incomplete records. From April 1 to June 30, 2019, more than 27,747 children were immunized and this is still a preliminary total. Through increased immunizations and records reconciliation, the number of children recorded as being fully immunized against measles has risen by 37,525.

The catch-up program has also helped parents and the public health system prepare for the mandatory immunization reporting requirement under B.C.'s [Vaccination Status Reporting Regulation](#), which will be implemented this fall. Starting in September, parents or guardians of children who have incomplete or missing vaccination records will be contacted by public health officials to provide those records or proof of medical contraindication. They will receive information on how to provide those records to public health and where their child can get immunized. If they have concerns about vaccination, there will also be opportunities to discuss those with public health officials.

Mandatory reporting of student's immunization status increases public health's ability to respond during an outbreak, as it allows health officials to quickly identify those who are under- and unimmunized. The good news is that most parents are already in compliance with this requirement, so they will not need to do anything further when the new school year starts.

I would like to thank our public health staff and immunization partners including family doctors and pharmacists for their incredible work to protect B.C. children. For example, pharmacists provided 1,220 doses of measles-containing vaccines to children and youth during the catch-up program, compared to the 21 doses provided during the same period in the previous year – a significant start in our ongoing concerted effort to increase immunization rates.

As we wrap up July, I would like to encourage parents looking forward to the start of the busy school season to check your children's immunization records and have them handy in case they are contacted by public health to provide those records. Visit Immunize BC's [website](#) for more information on how to locate immunization records. Remember, immunization is important for the health and well-being of your children, as well as the community.

If you have questions about providing your child's immunization records ahead of the school year for your child, please contact your local public health unit. If you have questions about immunization, please talk to your doctor or a public health nurse; you can also call the 8-1-1 provincial health line to talk to a registered nurse any time, every day of the year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adrian Dix', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Adrian Dix  
Minister of Health

## Measles in B.C.

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According to the [BC Centre for Disease Control](#), there have been 30 confirmed cases of measles reported in B.C. since Jan. 1, 2019. These include: nine cases in Fraser Health; 11 cases in Vancouver Coastal Health; two cases in Interior Health; and eight cases in Island Health.

To prevent further outbreaks and improve immunization rates for school-aged children, the Province launched a [measles immunization catch-up program](#) for kids in kindergarten to Grade 12 from April to the end of June 2019.<sup>1</sup>

In the first month of the program (April), health authorities' efforts were focused on reviewing students' immunization records, and informing families and schools. In May, immunization clinics ran in schools and communities across the province. In June, health authorities continued offering school and community immunization clinics across B.C., collected thousands of missing and incomplete immunization records, and entered this expanded information into the provincial immunization registry.

Pharmacists and family physicians have been key partners in the catch-up program. Children and adults can be immunized by pharmacists (children age five and up), as well as by their family physicians. During the catch-up program, pharmacists administered 1,220 doses of measles-containing vaccine to children and youth aged 5-19.

## Measles in Canada

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There have been 77 cases of measles reported in Canada from January 1 to July 6, 2019.<sup>2</sup>

These cases were reported by Québec, British Columbia, the Northwest Territories, Ontario, Alberta, New Brunswick, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

## Measles Worldwide

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As of July 23, 2019, the Government of Canada has issued a global measles notice advising that anyone who is not protected against measles is at risk of being infected when travelling internationally.<sup>3</sup>

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1 Data used in this report is not pulled from a static source, and will shift as immunization records continue to be updated.

2 Government of Canada. "Measles and Rubella Weekly Monitoring Report - Week 27" July 18, 2019.

3 Government of Canada. "Global Measles Notice." July 23, 2019.

In the United States, 1,148 individual cases of measles have been confirmed in 28 states between January 1 and July 18, 2019. This is the largest number of cases reported in the US since 1992.<sup>4</sup>

- California's Department of Public Health declared a measles outbreak in late April 2019.<sup>5</sup> As of July 17, 2019, 60 confirmed cases including 37 outbreak-associated cases have been reported.<sup>6</sup>
- As of July 17 2019, there are 282 confirmed measles cases in Rockland County, New York, northwest of New York City.<sup>7</sup> Rockland County issued its fourth county-wide State of Emergency relating to the measles outbreak on June 24, 2019.<sup>8</sup>
- Between September 2018 and July 22, 2019, there have been 637 confirmed measles cases in Brooklyn and Queens, New York.<sup>9</sup> The Mayor of New York City declared a public health emergency relating to the measles outbreak on April 9, 2019.<sup>10</sup>
- As of July 16, 2019, there have been 85 confirmed measles cases in Washington State.<sup>11</sup> On Jan. 25, 2019, the Governor of the State of Washington proclaimed a State of Emergency in all local counties.<sup>12</sup>

Other countries with large, ongoing measles outbreaks:

- Ukraine (50,803 confirmed cases in 2019)<sup>13</sup>
- India (21,543 confirmed cases in 2019)<sup>13</sup>
- Nigeria (24,157 confirmed cases in 2019)<sup>13</sup>
- Israel (more than 4,250 cases - March 2018 to May 31, 2019)<sup>14</sup>
- Vietnam (3,653 confirmed cases in 2019)<sup>13</sup>
- France (1,526 confirmed cases in 2019)<sup>13</sup>
- Japan (654 cases from January 1 to July 10, 2019)<sup>15</sup>

Given the ongoing measles outbreak in the world, it is likely there may be more cases in British Columbia linked to travel abroad or travellers to or through the province in the future.

The Ministry of Health is working with the Office of the Provincial Health Officer, health authorities and education partners to raise the measles immunization rate in children to 95% to achieve herd immunity in the future in order to protect those who cannot be immunized for medical reasons.

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4 US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Measles Cases and Outbreaks." July 18, 2019.

5 Los Angeles Times. "California measles cases reach 38, with outbreaks expected to keep growing." April 25, 2019.

6 California Department of Public Health. "Measles." July 17, 2019.

7 Rockland County. "Measles Information: 2018-2019 Measles Outbreak in Rockland County." July 17, 2019.

8 Rockland County. "State of Emergency Renewed." June 24, 2019.

9 New York City Health. "Measles." July 22, 2019.

10 CNN. "New York City declares a public health emergency amid Brooklyn measles outbreak." April 9, 2019.

11 Washington State Department of Health. "Measles 2019." July 16, 2019.

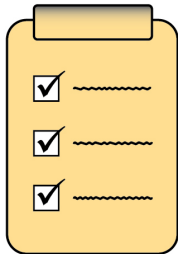
12 State of Washington. "Proclamation by the Governor." Jan. 25, 2019.

13 World Health Organization. "Reported measles and rubella cases and incidence rate by member states." July 10, 2019.

14 State of Israel, Ministry of Health. "Measles: Measles in Israel." 2019.

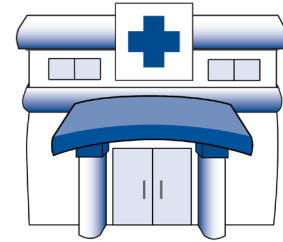
15 Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (Japan). "Cumulative measles cases, week 1-27, 2019." July 10, 2019.

## Measles Immunization Catch-up Program : April 1 - June 30, 2019



**590,748**

immunization records  
have been reviewed



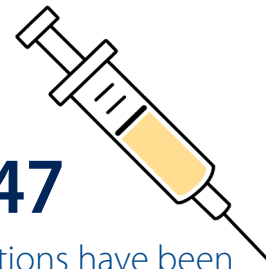
**3,584**

public health unit and  
community-based clinics held



**1,053**

school-based  
clinics held



**27,747**

immunizations have been  
provided to K-12 students by  
health authorities

## Measles Immunization Catch-up Program Summary

### During the Measles Immunization Catch-up Program, health authorities:

- ▶ Administered 27,747 measles immunizations;
- ▶ Reviewed 590,748 immunization records;
- ▶ Held 3,584 public health and community-based immunization clinics; and,
- ▶ Held 1,053 school-based immunization clinics.

### At the end of the three-month program (as of June 30, 2019):

- ▶ 10,154 more children have a known vaccination history in the immunization registry.
- ▶ 37,525 more children in the registry are fully immunized against measles.

### The program also saw:

- ▶ Pharmacists give 1,220 doses of measles-containing vaccine to B.C. children and youth.
- ▶ A 228.6% increase in the number of doses distributed by the BC Centre for Disease Control to health authorities (compared to the same three-month period in 2018).

### Total number of doses distributed by the BC Centre for Disease Control to health authorities

Date	2018	2019
January 1 – March 31	29,370	94,520
April 1 – June 30	33,360	109,640

### Total number of doses given to B.C. school-aged children (K-12) by health authorities<sup>1</sup>

Date	2019
April 1 – 30	5,433
May 1 – 31	13,965
June 1 – 30	8,349

<sup>1</sup> This data is not static and will shift as records continue to be updated and as pharmacists and health authorities submit immunization data. These numbers will change in any future reporting.

### Total number of doses given to B.C. children and youth 5-19 by pharmacists<sup>2,3</sup>

Date	2019
April 1 – 30	457
May 1 – 31	498
June 1 – 30	265

<sup>2</sup> This is included in the total number of doses given to B.C. school-aged children (K-12) by health authorities.

<sup>3</sup> This data will continue to be updated as pharmacists have up to six months to submit records.

### Total number of completed clinics held across the province

Completed Clinics	April 1 – June 30, 2019
Community	3,584
School	1,053

## Measles Immunization Catch-up Program : Health Authorities

Each health authority was actively involved in the measles immunization catch-up program that ran from April 1 to the end of June.

There are 82,195 First Nations children in the B.C. school system, including public, independent, alternative, First Nations schools and distance education. First Nations children's immunization and records are counted under regional health authorities based on their location of residence.

Over the period of the catch-up program, the health authorities sent out letters to parents through schools, reminding them of the importance of getting their children immunized, and informing them of the opportunity for under- and unimmunized children to catch-up on their measles immunization with available clinics in their communities or schools. Targeted information was also sent to parents with known missing or incomplete records.

Since the launch of the program, the number of school-aged children with no information in the provincial immunization registry has decreased. Ongoing review and follow-up is underway to further reduce this number. There has been a decrease in the number of students with zero recorded doses, and an increase in the number of students with one or two recorded doses.

This overall improvement in both the number of measles immunizations and status information will better position the health system to respond to a measles outbreak.

### Records Reconciliation

Immunization Records	April 15	June 30
no information on file	52,291	42,137

### Progress to date - measles-containing vaccine

Recorded Doses	April 15	June 30
0 dose received	33,665	25,464
1 dose received	41,169	40,912
2 doses received	470,406	507,931



## Immunization Status Reporting

Starting this fall, parents and guardians will be expected to provide public health units with immunization records for students enrolled in the provincial school system.

The Province is implementing this mandatory reporting requirement through the [Vaccination Status Reporting Regulation](#) to protect children and families from vaccine-preventable diseases. This mandatory reporting of the immunization status of students will ensure the public health system is prepared in the event of an outbreak. Furthermore, with the up-to-date records, public health can reach out to families with children behind on their immunizations and provide an opportunity to catch them up, as well as discuss any concerns with parents.

Most parents are already in compliance with this requirement, so they will not need to do anything further when the new school year starts. Parents or guardians with an incomplete or missing record will be contacted by public health on how to provide their child's immunization information, and receive information on upcoming school-based or community health clinics where their child can receive immunizations if they require them.

Public health officials will review school enrolment records in late August and into October 2019 to match them against immunization records for kindergarten-to-Grade 12 students that currently exist in the provincial immunization registry. For the first year of the reporting requirement, the goal will be to update the status of all immunization records on school-aged children by the end of the school year and help parents get their children up to date on immunizations.

B.C. has a comprehensive provincial childhood immunization program, which includes coverage for a wide variety of diseases including measles, mumps, rubella, tetanus, pertussis, polio, HPV, varicella, diphtheria, influenza, meningococcal disease and hepatitis.

To learn more about Vaccination Status Reporting Regulation, visit:

[www.healthlinkbc.ca/vaccination-status-reporting](http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/vaccination-status-reporting)

To learn more about B.C.'s provincial childhood immunization program, visit:

[immunizebc.ca/what-vaccines-does-your-child-need-and-when](http://immunizebc.ca/what-vaccines-does-your-child-need-and-when)

