



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

Measles Immunization Catch-up Program

June 2019

June 18, 2019

Dear British Columbians,

There continue to be measles outbreaks in other jurisdictions in Canada and several countries in the world. With summer on the horizon, many of us are taking vacations and travelling, so it's an important time to get immunized to protect ourselves and our families against measles as well as other vaccine-preventable diseases.

When we announced the [measles immunization catch-up program](#) in March 2019, we committed to providing monthly program updates. We are pleased to provide this second report, which details the progress in May 2019 as we continue to “catch-up” on all students who are under/unimmunized for measles.

In April, health authorities focused on reviewing students' immunization records, informing families and schools about the program, as well as following up with parents/guardians of children who were not fully immunized for measles. This laid the groundwork for planning where we needed to boost measles immunizations. Since we launched the program in April, 566,106 students' immunization records have been reviewed, with notifications to parents/guardians who have missing or incomplete records. Measles immunization clinics are in full swing at public health units, community health centres and schools across British Columbia. From April to May 2019, more than 15,000 children were immunized.

We are learning valuable lessons through this program that will ultimately improve the way we approach immunization. We are continuing to increase, review, and reconcile our health system immunization records as complete enrolment records are obtained from schools. Where we have missing or incomplete records, we are reaching out to parents to clarify their children's status. We've discovered that the number of children who are immunized is higher than what we thought, thanks to records being reviewed since April and through parents providing additional records. By holding measles immunization clinics in public health units, community health centres and schools, it has made it easier for parents/guardians to ensure their children are fully immunized against measles.

I had the opportunity to visit the Evergreen Community Health Centre in Vancouver last month, and it was heartwarming to see children receiving their measles immunization that day – to know that they will be protected against measles, mumps and rubella no matter where they live and visit in the future. I would like to thank our public health staff and immunization partners, including family doctors and pharmacists, for their support. Their feedback to health authorities and our ministry is invaluable and will help us improve our provincial immunization program in the future.

We are making real progress, but a sustained effort is required to achieve the immunity levels we need to protect our children. We are working with our immunization experts on the vaccine status reporting regulation that will start in September 2019. More details will be announced in the near future.

In the meantime, I encourage all parents/guardians in B.C. to check their children's immunization records to ensure their child's immunizations are up to date and to take advantage of the clinics running in communities right now. If you have questions about the catch-up program, please contact your regional health authority. If you have questions about immunization, please talk to your doctor or registered public health nurse. You can also call 8-1-1 to talk to a registered nurse at 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.

According to the [BC Centre for Disease Control](#), as of May 6, 2019, there have been 29 confirmed cases of measles reported in B.C. since January 2019. These include: nine cases in Fraser Health; 10 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 2019.¹

In the first month of the program (April), health authorities' efforts were focused on reviewing all of the students' immunization records, and informing families and schools. In May, immunization clinics have been running in schools and communities across the province.

Pharmacists and family physicians are 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. In May 2019, pharmacists administered 498 doses of measles-containing vaccine to children and youth aged 5-19.

Measles in Canada

There have been 61 cases of measles reported in Canada from January 1 to June 11, 2019.

New Brunswick is the sixth province/territory to report measles cases, after Québec, British Columbia, the Northwest Territories, Ontario and Alberta.²

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. "Weekly measles and rubella reports." May 29, 2019.

Measles Worldwide

As of June 11, 2019, the Government of Canada has measles-related alerts in place for those travelling to the United States, Europe (31 countries), South America (four countries), Asia (three countries) and Africa (17 countries).³

In the United States, 1022 individual cases of measles have been confirmed in 26 states between January 1 and June 6, 2019. This is the largest number of cases reported in the US since 1992.⁴

- As of June 10, 2019, there are 262 confirmed measles cases in Rockland County, New York, northwest of New York City.⁵ Rockland County issued its third county-wide State of Emergency relating to the measles outbreak on May 26, 2019.⁶
- Between September 2018 and June 10, 2019, there have been 588 confirmed measles cases in Brooklyn and Queens, New York.⁷ The Mayor of New York City declared a public health emergency relating to the measles outbreak on April 9, 2019.⁸
- As of June 10, 2019, there have been 81 confirmed measles cases in Washington State.⁹ On Jan. 25, 2019, the Governor of the State of Washington proclaimed a State of Emergency in all local counties.¹⁰

Other countries with large, ongoing measles outbreaks:

- Madagascar (61,401 confirmed cases in 2019)¹¹
- Ukraine (34,188 confirmed cases in 2019)¹¹
- India (12,439 confirmed cases in 2019)¹¹
- Nigeria (10,626 confirmed cases in 2019)¹¹
- France (628 cases since Jan. 1, 2019)¹¹
- Japan (590 cases from January 1 to June 5, 2019)¹²

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.

3 Government of Canada. "Travel health notices." May 27, 2019.

4 US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Measles Cases and Outbreaks." June 6, 2019.

5 Rockland County. "Measles Information: 2018-2019 Measles Outbreak in Rockland County." June 10, 2019.

6 Rockland County. "State of Emergency Renewed." May 28, 2019.

7 New York City Health. "Measles." May 24, 2019.

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

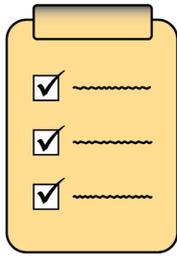
9 Washington State Department of Health. "Measles 2019." May 27, 2019.

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

11 World Health Organization. "Reported measles and rubella cases and incidence rates by member states." May 8, 2019.

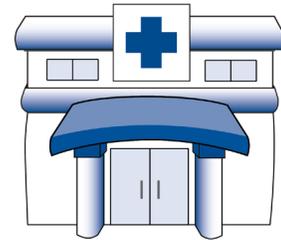
12 Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (Japan). "Cumulative measles cases, week 1-22, 2019." June 5, 2019.

Measles Immunization Catch-up Program : April 1 - May 31, 2019



566,106

immunization records
have been reviewed



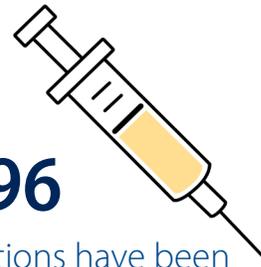
2,388

public health unit and
community-based clinics held



858

school-based
clinics held



15,796

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

Measles Immunization Catch-up Program : Health Authorities

Each health authority has been actively involved in the measles immunization catch-up program.

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 in April and May, the health authorities have sent out letters to parents through schools, reminding them of the importance of getting their children immunized, and informing them of the opportunity for un- or under-immunized children to catch-up on their measles vaccinations with available clinics in their communities or schools. Targeted information was also sent to parents with known missing or incomplete records. In addition, health authorities have been working with the Ministry of Education to get complete enrolment records for B.C. schools. All public schools are now submitting information and work is underway to have all independent schools also submit their student enrolment information.

Health authorities are reviewing and reconciling these student names against their health system immunization registry.

To date, health authorities have reviewed 566,106 records.

Where there is no student information, zero recorded doses, or only one recorded dose and the second dose is overdue, health authorities are asking parents to provide information or take advantage of clinics to get their children immunized.

Since the launch of the program, the number of children with no information has decreased by 5,831. Ongoing review and follow-up is underway to further reduce this number.

Records Reconciliation of No Information

	# of Students Mid April	# of Students May 29	Change
No information	52,291	46,460	5,831

We have also seen 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. These numbers have changed month-over-month as records are being updated through the review process, and the additional 15,796 immunizations that have been given to students through health authorities.

Progress to date

Recorded Doses	April	May
0 dose received	33,665	28,811
1 dose received	41,169	41,061
2 doses received	470,406	494,282

The number of students we now know have two doses has increased by 23,876 over the period of the catch-up program due to both record reconciliation and net new immunizations. 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.

It is important to note that there is lag time required for data entry for some providers and this information will change over time due as more records are entered into the system and existing records are reconciled.

Measles Immunization Catch-up Program: B.C.

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 – May 31	24,570	96,420

Total number of doses given to B.C. school-aged children (K-12) by health authorities¹

Date	2019
April 1 – 30	4,274
May 1 – 31	11,522

¹ 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 likely change in upcoming reports.

Total number of doses given to B.C. children and youth 5-19 by pharmacists^{2,3}

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

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

³ 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 province⁴

Completed Clinics	April 1 – May 31 2019
Community	2,388
School	858

⁴ In relation to the May report, the number of community clinics is less, and the number of school clinics is greater. Health authorities made adjustments to clinic access in response to perceived demand.

Total number of clinics planned in B.C. in June

Planned Clinics	# of clinics
Community	901
School	230

