

20 March 2014

Dear Students and Staff at the Kwantlen Polytechnic University:

We are writing to let you know that you may have been exposed to a suspect case of measles if you were at the Langley campus on March 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

#### WHAT IS MEASLES?

Measles (red measles) is a severe illness, typically prevented by vaccination. It is caused by the measles virus, which spreads easily through the air when an infected person breathes, coughs, or sneezes. The measles virus can survive in small droplets in the air for several hours. The airborne spread of measles virus makes the disease very contagious.

Symptoms of measles include fever, cough, runny nose, and red and inflamed eyes (often sensitive to light), typically starting 7 – 14 days after exposure. These are followed 3-7 days later by a rash, which starts first on the face and neck, and spreads to the chest, arms and legs, and lasts at least 3 days. You may also notice spots inside your mouth that look like small grains of sand on a red base.

#### WHO IS CONSIDERED PROTECTED AGAINST MEASLES?

- Individuals with 2 documented doses of a measles-containing vaccine after 1 year of age (MMR is the vaccine that protects against measles, mumps and rubella). Two doses of MMR is recommended and available free for all individuals born on or *after* January 1, 1970 (January 1, 1957 for health care workers).
- Individuals born *before* January 1, 1970 (January 1, 1957 for health care workers) are considered protected due to natural disease. No MMR immunization is recommended.
- Individuals with history of measles disease.

Please take the opportunity to review your immunization status. If you are not protected against measles or uncertain of your status, getting a dose of MMR vaccine now is safe and will protect you from future exposures, but unfortunately cannot protect you against this recent exposure; you will need to remain vigilant for symptoms. Should you wish to make an appointment for immunization, contact your family doctor, an immunizing pharmacist or your local health unit.

#### WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I DEVELOP SYMPTOMS?

Should you develop fever, cough, or other measles symptoms, you should stay at home and keep away from others who may not be immune. Contact your health unit or your family physician, who will review your immune status and advise you whether to seek care. If you do need to visit a clinic, it is best to **call ahead** so that you can be seen quickly and without infecting other people, since this infection can spread to susceptible people quickly in places like waiting rooms and emergency rooms. The doctor or triage nurse can make sure you are taken into a closed area for an examination and attend the clinic at a time when the waiting room is empty. Bring your immunization records with you. If the doctor determines you may have measles, a blood test, and throat swab and/or urine sample will be necessary for confirmation.

The BC HealthFile about measles is available online at <http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthfiles/hfile14b.stm>

If you have any questions, you may contact your local Public Health Unit (numbers below) or HealthLinkBC at 811.

<b>Abbotsford HU</b> Tel: 604-864-3400	<b>Agassiz HU</b> Tel: 604-793-7160	<b>Burnaby HU</b> Tel: 604-918-7605	<b>Chilliwack HU</b> Tel: 604-702-4900	<b>Cloverdale HU, Surrey</b> Tel: 604-575-5100	<b>Guildford HU, Surrey</b> Tel: 604-587-4750
<b>Hope HU</b> Tel: 604-860-7630	<b>Langley HU</b> Tel: 604-539-2900	<b>Maple Ridge HU</b> Tel: 604-476-7000	<b>Mission HU</b> Tel: 604-814-5500	<b>New Westminster HU</b> Tel: 604-777-6740	<b>Newport HU, Port Moody</b> Tel: 604-949-7200
<b>Newton HU, Surrey</b> Tel: 604-592-2000	<b>North Delta HU</b> Tel: 604-507-5400	<b>North Surrey HU</b> Tel: 604-587-7900	<b>Port Coquitlam HU</b> Tel: 604-777-8700	<b>South Delta HU</b> Tel: 604-952-3550	<b>White Rock HU</b> Tel: 604-542-4000