

Date : 2/3/2025 8:38:21 PM
From : "Garcia,Imelda M (DSHS)"
To : "Katherine Wells"
Subject : Re: Measles
Attachment : image001.png;

Thank you Katherine. Get some rest.

Imelda Garcia, MPH
Chief Deputy Commissioner
Department of State Health Services
Cell:
Email:

From: Katherine Wells
Sent: Monday, February 3, 2025 8:33:01 PM
To: Garcia,Imelda M (DSHS)
Subject: Re: Measles

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I found this article helpful. Hopefully we are not looking at something this large, but I'd rather be prepared.

Katherine Wells, MPH
Director
Lubbock Public Health

From: Katherine Wells
Sent: Monday, February 3, 2025 8:17 PM
To:
Subject: Re: Measles

Thanks for calling me today. I was a bit flustered because we were getting a lot of calls from our medical facilities. Here's some background that might help when the DSHS team huddles in the morning. I shared this info with staff here, but I don't know what will get up to you. Feel free to call me if you have any questions.

Cases, confirmed 4, pending ?
Gaines County – census pop – 22,523, 36% under 18
Estimated number of Mennonites – 12,000, Children 2,000- 3,000 school aged.
The number of county residents is underestimated because the Mennonites don't complete the census. There is an estimate from electric meters of 25,000+ in the county. The Mennonite community came to Gaines County from Mexico in the 1970s. They speak Spanish and low-German.

On Friday, I spoke with three women from the Mennonite community. They expressed that people are worried and would be receptive to intervention but emphasized the need for a cautious approach to avoid alienating anyone. With that info I pushed the region and south plains public health district to set up an ICS structure this morning, which is done. Everyone is taking this seriously, but I think this may be moving outside the Mennonite community.

Below is some info I learned from speaking with the Mennonite women and also from talking to providers and staff today. Hopefully this gives you some perspective.

- Younger people in the Mennonite community are not vaccinated—those over 25 are more likely to be vaccinated. Young parents are not vaccinating their children. Older community members understand that Measles is dangerous.
- Most children attend German Schools and are not at the ISD. During the last week of January at least two German School closed for a few days because of illness. There are reports this week that schools are closed for the entire week. According to one of the women I spoke with 55 children were absent from one school on 1/24.
- The women reported that there were sick children with measles symptoms as early as November
- The community feels burned by COVID-19 restrictions; we need to be mindful of this.
- We need to respect the culture; don't go in telling people what to do. By-in from men is important.
- We should focus on education – signs/symptoms, how it's spread
- There are large WhatsApp groups – used more than Facebook – best way to get info out to everyone (we have identified people that will post to these groups for us)
- Outreach should focus on the broader community, not just Mennonites – make sure everything is in English, Spanish, and Low

German - we don't want to alienate the community.

- South Plains Public Health made contact with schools, churches and reached out to business today (2/3) with Measles awareness posters.
- Vaccine clinics are being planned in Gaines County- should start by Thursday
- Lubbock Public Health is hosting a virtual provider meeting at 10:00 on Tuesday to talk about signs, symptoms, testing and prophylaxis. Providers from across the region are invited.
- The health authority for south plains, [REDACTED] is new to the department and only works a few hours a month. However, he also works for Lubbock Public Health and will support what's best for the community.
- We have patients in Lubbock clinics with measles symptoms testing negative for COVID & flu but refusing measles testing. Part of the call on Tuesday with clinics is to figure out why and if we can do something to address the issue.

If there's an opportunity to talk to folks at CDC, I'd like any resources they have for measles education especially for illiterate populations.

Katherine

Katherine Wells, MPH
Director
Lubbock Public Health

From: Katherine Wells
Sent: Monday, February 3, 2025 4:22 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Measles

Do you have a few minutes to talk about the measles outbreak? I think this may be very large.

My cell is [REDACTED]

Katherine Wells, MPH
Director of Public Health
City of Lubbock

