

## **Preventing Measles Importation at Children's Camps 2009**

The New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) Bureau of Immunization would like to raise camp operator awareness about ongoing measles outbreaks in several European countries and reiterate the importance of measles vaccination, which is the best available measure for preventing infection. In 2008, 89% of the measles cases in the U.S. were related to importations by U.S. residents who traveled abroad and by foreign visitors.

### **Background**

In Europe, very few countries have reached vaccination coverage high enough to prevent measles outbreaks and eliminate the disease. This results in a significant proportion of the European population remaining at risk for acquiring measles. For the foreseeable future, measles importations into the U.S. will continue to occur because measles is still common in Europe and other regions of the world.

In England, measles transmission was interrupted because of high levels of vaccination in that country. Unfortunately, measles has now become widespread again in England. Vaccination rates have fallen in recent years and, coupled with lower rates of vaccination across Europe, the population is at high risk of acquiring measles.

### **Avoiding the Importation of Measles**

To ensure the camp communities avoid importation and spread of measles, all employees and campers should be immune to measles. Immunity includes receiving 2 doses of measles containing vaccine or laboratory evidence of measles immunity. Whenever feasible, staff and campers should be vaccinated before arriving at camp so that sufficient time elapses to allow for the development of immunity.

### **Additional Information**

For additional information, please call your local health department or the NYSDOH Bureau of Immunization at 518-473-4437. More information can also be obtained at the CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases website at <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/>.