

# WHO/UNICEF SECRETARIAT SUPPORTING MEASLES OUTBREAK PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE IN THE PACIFIC

## MEASLES OUTBREAK IN THE PACIFIC - SITUATION REPORT No 1 22 November 2019

### Global measles resurgence

Since 2017, a global resurgence of measles cases has been affecting all regions of the world. In global immunization surveys, coverage for the second dose of measles-containing vaccine (MCV2) was 69%, with significant variability between regions. In the Asia Pacific region, outbreaks and clusters of measles cases are being reported from countries where measles has been eliminated, including Australia, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, as well as higher incidence in endemic countries such as Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam.

As of 22 November 2019, Samoa, Tonga and Fiji have reported measles cases, while American Samoa has reported two cases of measles acquired in Samoa. The outbreaks in Samoa and Tonga are caused by the D8 strain (genotype) of measles virus. Measles vaccine coverage varies in Pacific island countries and areas, ranging from 31% in Samoa to 99% in the Cook Islands, Nauru and Niue.

### Country Situation Overview

#### SAMOA

- The Samoa Ministry of Health declared a measles outbreak on 16 October. There is widespread community transmission, with the outbreak strain the same as that causing the current outbreak in New Zealand.
- Samoa activated its Health Emergency Operations Centre (HEOC) which meets daily for health sector coordination.
- The Government of Samoa declared a state of emergency on 15 November because of the continuing outbreak. Under the new Orders of the State of Emergency the Government has made vaccination mandatory for priority groups.
- On 20 November commenced the roll out of a national measles vaccination campaign which is providing free vaccines to priority groups. Groups prioritised for vaccination are females and males aged 6 months to 19 years; and females of childbearing age, aged from 20 to 35 years.
- Under the national orders, other restrictions have been implemented including the restriction on inter-island travel for children under 19 years of age; all schools are temporarily closed; and children under 18 are barred from attending public gatherings or going to any medical facility, unless they require medical attention. Unimmunized pregnant women are further restricted from attending their place of employment (public and private sector).
- As of 22 November 2019, the Disease Surveillance Team from the Ministry of Health recorded a total of 1,644 measles cases. To date, 20 measles related deaths have been recorded, with one fatality in the past 24 hours. Approximately 89% of measles cases are in Upolu, and notably concentrated in the Vaimauga West and Faleata West. 92% of current measles

admissions are children, including 11 critically ill children in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). As of 22 November the total number of measles admissions recorded for the outbreak was 628.

- UNICEF has delivered to Samoa a total of 105,500 doses of MCV since 1 October. In addition, UNICEF has also delivered 30,000 Vitamin A tablets, and six 42 sqm tents. Six units of ice-lined refrigerators (ILRs) and three emergency trolleys are in the pipeline. UNICEF has deployed three health and nutrition specialists, one communication for development specialist and one logistics specialist to provide technical assistance to government and augment the Samoa-based immunisation specialist and child protection officer.
- WHO's support to Samoa has been coordinated through the Country Office for Samoa, American Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau. WHO has been supporting surveillance and epidemiology, the immunisation program and risk communication and has deployed two public health experts/epidemiologists, vaccinologist and a risk communication officer to date, and has established a surge pipeline for additional human resources, in addition to the ongoing technical collaboration between the Ministry of Health of Samoa and WHO under the Samoa Country Cooperation Strategy.

## **TONGA**

- On 22 October, the Tonga Ministry of Health declared a measles outbreak. The last outbreak of measles in Tonga was in 2010. The first cluster of cases in the current outbreak were teenage rugby players who had travelled to Auckland, NZ. The outbreak is characterized by transmission in schools and has affected mainly teenage males and young adults. Cases among adolescents and young people continue to be the majority in this outbreak, with 260 (84%) cases occurring in people aged 10 to 24 years. Tonga's Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), on the advice of MOH, had announced the temporary closure of all government primary schools from 14 to 25 November.
- As of 19 November 2019, 310 cases of confirmed or suspected measles and no deaths have been recorded. Eighty-eight percent (88%) or 272 of the cases are in the island of Tongatapu, 12% (38 cases) in Vava'u island, two cases in 'Eua island one case in island of Ha'apai. The three new cases from new geographical areas are reported to have epidemiologic links to the cases in Tongatapu.
- The Ministry of Health of Tonga is currently planning to launch a supplementary immunisation activity (SIA) targeting children and young adults between 10 to 24 years.
- Since 1 October, UNICEF has delivered a total of 14,500 doses of MCV to Tonga. Two ILRs are also on their way to Tonga. A total 8,238 vaccines have been administered as of 19 November.
- WHO has been providing public health technical support to Tonga and has deployed three epidemiologists to the Ministry of Health and has established a surge pipeline for additional human resources.

## **FIJI**

- On 7 November, the Fiji Ministry of Health and Medical Services declared a measles outbreak in the Serua-Namosi Subdivision, Central Division, following the identification of two laboratory confirmed and two suspected measles cases. The last measles outbreak in Fiji was in 2006.
- In Fiji, as of 22 November, 10 cases of measles have been confirmed with two more suspected. No measles-related deaths have been reported. Of the 9 cases, six are children (four of them are less than five years old). All the cases are concentrated in the Namosi/Serua subdivision, west of the capital of Suva in the main island of Viti Levu. Two cases are hospitalised and in isolation at Navua hospital. An additional imported suspected measles case from Tonga was placed under quarantine on 17 November.
- Current measles vaccine stocks are being reserved for the following high-risk target groups:
  - The residents of Serua/Namosi
  - Children from 6 months to 3 years old.
  - People travelling overseas with proof of travel (ticket/travel itinerary)
- The most recent supplementary immunisation activity in Fiji was in September 2017 for children aged 12 months to 10 years.
- Since 1 October 2019, UNICEF has delivered a total 135,000 doses of measles-containing vaccine.

#### **AMERICAN SAMOA**

- Two suspected cases of measles were placed in quarantine while awaiting laboratory confirmation. Both are in travellers exposed in Samoa.

#### **Preparedness activities**

Various supplementary immunisation activities have been undertaken in all Pacific countries and areas. These include:

- Zero dose at age 6-11 months targeting all infants in outbreak areas or recommended for infants travelling to outbreak areas. The zero dose is in addition to the scheduled doses in the national childhood immunisation schedule
- Lowering age of the first measles dose to 12 months of age
- Mass vaccination of high risk age groups (Kiribati, Solomon Islands, planned for Vanuatu, Chuuk, RMI, Tuvalu)
- Vaccination of healthcare workers, port authorities, outbound travellers, overseas seasonal workers and educators (some or all in different countries)
- Population-wide vaccination in some of the microstates of the Pacific
- Reaching out to the diaspora to get vaccinated before travel to the Pacific
- Measles task forces established in most Pacific island countries to coordinate implementation of their measles action plans
- Public communications describing the signs and symptoms of measles, infection prevention measure to prevent transmission including in health care settings and promoting vaccination for priority groups

- HCW training of clinical triage/measles diagnosis, sample collection, infection prevention and control, immediate notification to public health
- Post-exposure vaccination of identified contacts
- Social distancing measures (e.g. cancelling mass gatherings, games, closing of schools).

### Pacific Measles Communication toolkit

To help Pacific health authorities communicate about measles, WHO and UNICEF have developed a Pacific Measles Preparedness and Response Communication Toolkit.

The toolkit is a regional resource that countries can use and adapt to their country’s needs. It includes a range of communication products targeting three main audiences: general public, health workers and travellers.



Products in the toolkit include: social media posts, airport banners/signage, posters, health worker advisory posters, measles pamphlets, short motion graphics and more.

Currently Tonga, Fiji, Niue, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands are utilising the package (some or all of the products).

Currently WHO and UNICEF are running a regional social media campaign using the content, promoting alertness for measles signs and symptoms and traveller vaccination.

### Measles vaccines

Since 1 October 2019, UNICEF has delivered vaccines and supplies to the following countries

Country	Measles-containing vaccine sent since 01st Oct (doses)
Samoa	105,500
Fiji	135,000
Tonga	14,500
Vanuatu	30,000
Cook Islands	500
FSM	-
Nauru	1,000
Niue	1,000
RMI	-
Solomon Islands	-
Tokelau	1,050
Tuvalu	1,500
Kiribati	-
<b>Totals</b>	<b>290,050</b>

The number of vaccines supplied to each country are based on the estimated number of persons in their priority groups for immunisation.

## Supplies and equipment

### WHO Measles PPE procurements as at 31 Oct 2019

Item	Description	UoM	Qty
Particulate Respirator	N95, adult size 3M 8210	box/20	200
Face mask	3-ply, 99% efficiency, with metal nose-clip	box/50	500
Examination gloves	without powder size small, ambidextrous, Nitrile non-sterile, disposable	box/100	20
Examination gloves	without powder size medium, ambidextrous, Nitrile non-sterile, disposable	box/100	35
Examination gloves	without powder size large, ambidextrous, Nitrile non-sterile, disposable	box/100	35
Examination gloves	without powder size extra large, ambidextrous, Nitrile non-sterile, disposable	box/100	25
Vitamin A	Retinol, 200.000 IU, caps.	box/500	30
hand sanitiser	Sterillium, glycerol 85%	100ml	500
Disposable gowns	AAMI level 2, non sterile, disp., size S	each	100
Disposable gowns	AAMI level 2, non sterile, disp., size M	each	100
Disposable gowns	AAMI level 2, non sterile, disp., size L	each	300
Disposable gowns	AAMI level 2, non sterile, disp., size XL	each	300
Disposable gowns	AAMI level 2, non sterile, disp., size XXL	each	300
Swabs	Copan UTM 306C	box/50	20
DBS filter cards	Dried blood spot (DBS) card	box/50	20

In response to communications from the CEO, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Samoa, dated 17 November the Pacific Community (SPC) procured the following items and has been dispatched today (22 November) to Apia. SPC coordinates its support to affected PICs through the WHO/UNICEF secretariat.

Item	Qty
Drip Stand	15
Steel Heavy Duty Wheelchair, Chrome Plated Frame, Detachable Armrest	15
SECA 803 Digital Scale 150KG	8
IE 12A Digital 12-Channel ECG Machine	4
IE 12A Thermal Recording ECG Paper Z -Fold 210mm*140m	20
Mediscope Nebulizer	9
Mask Cone Style N95 Particulate Resp	9
Mask Cone Style N95 Particulate Resp (N95-ML)	9
Terumo Syringe 5ml (1x100)	45
Nasal Oxygen Cannula 2m Adult Pack of 25	20
Nasal Oxygen Cannula 2m Child Pack of 25	10
Nasal Oxygen Cannula 2m Child Pack of 25	10
Nasal Oxygen Cannula 2m Neonate Pack of 25	10
Air Freight & Handling Charges Till Apia Port	1
Erka Sphygmanometer with Sethoscope	7
Adult Cuff 1 Tube 32-43cm - Large	7

The secretariat would be pleased to include the support provided by other partners in the next and subsequent sitreps.

### **WHO/UNICEF weekly coordination meeting**

A weekly coordination meeting will be held on Wednesdays at 09:30am at the WHO office in Suva – please let us know if you will join in person or by Zoom, by emailing [Measles2019@who.int](mailto:Measles2019@who.int) Any change in venue will be advised.

For those wishing to call in:

Join from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS or Android: <https://wpro-who.zoom.us/j/5993964937>

### **Or Telephone:**

+1 669 900 6833 (US Toll), +1 646 876 9923 (US Toll)

Meeting ID: 599 396 4937

International numbers available: <https://wpro-who.zoom.us/u/acZxLvmltF>