

MEDIA RELEASE

Information **Advisory** Warning Update

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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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Chickenpox Outbreak in Area High School

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and St. Clair County Health Department have identified a chickenpox (varicella) outbreak at Marysville High School. Marysville school district officials have been working closely with the Health Department to identify approximately 37 susceptible, unvaccinated students. Letters from the Health Department were given to the district to help with parent notification.

In accordance with Michigan Public Health Code, exposed susceptible students who cannot provide documentation of vaccination or immunity history will be excluded from attending school, work or extracurricular activities until 21 days after the last identified case (date to be determined and dependent on cases). Immunity is defined as:

- Documentation of two valid doses of any appropriate live varicella vaccine at or after 12 months of age
- Lab evidence of immunity or confirmation of the disease

Students will be re-admitted to school upon getting vaccinated or providing the Health Department with acceptable documentation of immunity. If this is the student's first varicella vaccine dose, the student may be conditionally re-admitted back to school; if it is the student's second dose they will be immediately readmitted after vaccination.

Chickenpox is a vaccine-preventable disease that spreads in the air when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. It can also be spread by touching or breathing in the virus particles that come from

chickenpox blisters. A person can spread the disease from 1 to 2 days before they get the rash until all their chickenpox blisters have formed scabs (usually 5-7 days). It can take 10-21 days after exposure to develop chickenpox, which is why unvaccinated students are susceptible.

Symptoms may include:

- An itchy rash of blisters
- Fever
- Headache
- Feeling tired

In some cases chickenpox can cause serious problems, especially in vulnerable populations like infants, adolescents, adults, pregnant women, or people with weakened immune systems:

- Skin infections
- Dehydration
- Pneumonia
- Encephalitis

Dr. Annette Mercatante, St. Clair County Health Department's Medical Health Officer stated "The chickenpox (varicella) vaccine is the best protection from chickenpox. It is important to make sure you and your children's vaccines are up to date to help prevent outbreaks and protect people who can't be vaccinated."

Vaccinations are available at your private physician's office or at the St. Clair County Health Department and Teen Health Center. Walk-in vaccine clinics are available Mondays from 10:00 am – 6:00 pm and Wednesday's 8:00am – 4:00pm; also available by appointment at the main office located at 3415 28th Street in Port Huron, call (810) 987-5300. The Teen Health Center, located at 2215 Court Street offers vaccinations by appointment for those 10-21 years of age, call (810) 987-1311.

For more information, visit www.scchealth.co or call (810) 987-5300. Follow us on social media @scchdmi.

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