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To promote and protect the physical, mental, social, and environmental health for the people of Kings County through education and prevention

November 16, 2015

Re: Chickenpox in Kings County

Dear Colleagues,

Since mid October, we have received several reports of varicella (chickenpox). Two have been confirmed: one under 12 months and one preschool-aged who was unvaccinated for chickenpox. At present there is no evidence among the reported cases to indicate an outbreak in Kings County. A low level of varicella is expected given delayed and missed vaccinations in our county and state. However, the following recommendations are suggested to boost prevention efforts:

- Consider signage requesting advance phone call to reception/registration and/or for patient to wait outside if symptomatic with rash illness while arrangements can be made to place patient directly into examination room for evaluation. Some of the children in your waiting room might be at risk for complicated varicella – those ineligible for vaccination comes to mind.
- CDC recommends two doses of chickenpox vaccine for all susceptible persons without contraindications. Two doses of the vaccine are about 98% effective at preventing chickenpox. Consider taking measures to complete the two dose regimen as soon as it is practical. The first dose may be given at 12 months. Though the second dose of varicella is generally administered at 4-6 years of age (typically just prior to Kindergarten entry), it may be given earlier as follows (in accordance with ACIP recommendations):
 - For children 12 months to 12 years, as soon as 3 months after the first dose
 - For individuals \geq 13 years, as soon as 4 weeks after the first dose.

When chickenpox is known to be circulating in the community, giving the first dose as soon as possible and utilizing minimum interval dosing schedules as outlined above for the second dose can be an effective strategy to mitigate the disease in our area.

ACIP recommendations may be referenced here:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/hcp/imz/catchup.html>. Additional provider and patient education information may be referenced here: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/varicella/default-hcp.htm>.

Please feel free to contact Kings County Department of Public Health: 584-1401 regarding any questions. Health Officer—Dr. Michael MacLean – tel: 852-2876; Immunization Coordinator—Angela Swanson, RN – tel: 852-4523; Communicable Disease Surveillance Coordinator—Sharon Soong, PHN – tel: 852-2572

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