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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ANN ARBOR STUDENT TESTS POSITIVE FOR MEASLES

Rare but Highly Contagious Disease Highlights the Need for Childhood Vaccinations

YPSILANTI, Mich., October 2, 2007—Washtenaw County Public Health Department officials today said that an Ann Arbor elementary school student was diagnosed with measles on October 1, after a Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) lab confirmed preliminary test results. All students at Burns Park elementary school left classes today with a letter from their principal, a letter from the Health Department, and a Health Department fact sheet discussing measles, and what is being done to prevent the spread of the disease in their school.

The Health Department letter instructed persons exhibiting a rash illness to stay home to avoid exposing others and to call their medical provider. Any persons who have either not received two Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) vaccinations or have not had a natural infection were asked to stay home until October 8, 2007 and to receive the MMR vaccine.

Disease from measles is characterized by significant fever and a distinctive rash, along with cough, runny nose or conjunctivitis. Measles is spread by droplets from the mouth through sneezing, coughing or speaking and is highly contagious. Measles symptoms usually begin with a runny nose, watery eyes, cough, and a high fever. A raised rash usually appears on the 3-7th day. A person with measles is contagious from 4 days before rash onset until 4 days after rash onset. Symptoms usually occur from 7-18 days after exposure but may occur as long as 21 days after exposure.

Routine childhood vaccinations for measles, mumps and rubella have practically eradicated these diseases in American schoolchildren since the vaccinations were first introduced in the late 1950s. Nationwide, fewer than 100 cases of measles have been reported annually in recent years.

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Stan Reedy, Medical Director for the Washtenaw County Public Health Department, urged parents to make sure their children have received the MMR vaccination. “This case highlights the fact that measles still exists and circulates, and can present a potential health risk to children and adults. This is particularly true if you travel internationally, especially in areas where vaccination coverage is not as widespread,” he said. “The best way to protect all children from measles is to ensure they receive the series of two MMR vaccinations.”

The Washtenaw County Public Health Department has been working closely with the Ann Arbor Public Schools and the Michigan Department of Community Health to monitor the case. Once the diagnosis was confirmed late Monday afternoon, the Health Department sent electronic messages to County health care providers, reminding them to report suspect measles cases to the Health Department and to be vigilant for any cases of rash illness that may indicate measles.

For more information about the Ann Arbor Public School system, visit:

http://www.aaps.k12.mi.us/aaps.home/aaps_home

or contact:

Liz Margolis, Director of Communications, Ann Arbor Public Schools, at: (734) 994-2236

For a County Health Department fact sheet with more information about measles, visit:

http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/departments/public_health/phcontent/cd_fact_sheets/measles.pdf

For general information about measles from the CDC, visit:

http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/submenus/sub_measles.htm

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