

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

## MEASLES OUTBREAK IN THE PACIFIC - SITUATION REPORT No 5 December 6, 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.

To date, Samoa, Tonga, Fiji and American Samoa have reported measles cases. 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. Wide community transmission continues, and the country is under a State of Emergency declared by the Government on 15 November. A Health Emergency Operations Centre (HEOC) meets daily for health sector coordination and provides updates on the situation (SITREPS 1 - 4)
- As of December 6, the MoH confirms a total of 4,357 cases with 140 new cases reported within the last 24 hours. Of all measles cases 52% (2,263) are children aged below five years. Of the 62 recorded deaths from measles, 87% (55), are children aged below five years. Of the 178 measles cases currently requiring hospitalization 81% are in Tupua Tamasese Meaole Hospital (TTMH). Twenty children are critically ill in the Intensive Care Unit/High Dependency Unit (ICU). As at December 4, 2019, vaccination coverage for infants and children aged 6 months to 4 years is 82%. *Source: Government of Samoa, NEOC, PR 19, Facebook.*  
<https://www.facebook.com/samoagovt/>
- Incoming Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs) currently operational: Australia (AUSMAT), (United Kingdom (UKEMT), New Zealand (NZMAT, Counties Manukau, NZ Red Cross), French Polynesia EMT, Pacifica Medical Association (PACMAT), EMT from Norway, EMT from Japan, US Hawaii, ADRA, Save The Children. In the coming days, additional EMTs might also deploy as there are ongoing assessments. These EMTs are being coordinated through an EMT Coordination Cell (EMT-CC), led by the Ministry of Health and WHO.
- WHO's support to Samoa is being coordinated through the WHO Country Office for Samoa, American Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau. WHO has been supporting surveillance and epidemiology, immunization programme planning and implementation, infectious diseases and

antimicrobial resistance monitoring and response, risk communication, and emergency medical team coordination.

- To date, WHO has deployed five public health experts - epidemiologists, an infectious disease and AMR specialist, a vaccinologist, a psychosocial support expert a risk communication officer, a logistician and a health cluster coordinator to date. WHO 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.
- In collaboration with UNICEF, WHO supported procurement of MR vaccines and Vitamin A as well as delivery of human immunoglobulin donated by French Polynesia.
- UNICEF has delivered to Samoa a total of 265,500 bundled<sup>1</sup> doses of MCV since 1 October of which 100,000 doses were donated by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (NZ MFAT) and 35,000 Vitamin A capsules. Six units of ice-lined refrigerators (ILRs) and three emergency trolleys are in the pipeline.
- UNICEF has deployed one health and nutrition specialist, one communication for development specialist, one communications specialist, two child protection specialists, one logistician and a senior emergency coordinator to provide technical assistance to government and augment the Samoa-based immunisation specialist and child protection officer. A risk communications specialist has arrived in Fiji and undergoing briefing. She will be deployed to Samoa on 8 December.
- UNICEF is providing technical assistance to the MoH in planning and implementation measles outbreak response activities including provision of outreach services, effective vaccine management, improving data quality, and supervision and monitoring. UNICEF is also providing technical and product advice on medical equipment.
- UNICEF and WHO are providing technical support to the Risk Communications working group led by the Ministry of Health in the development of content for public service announcements on major national radio and television broadcasts, including talk shows, as well as for social media. UNICEF provided technical support for the risk communication activities for the two-day nationwide shutdown to give way to the house-to-house vaccination campaign. UNICEF is also leading the media monitoring for the risk communication team and capacity building for online/social media content forward planning and monitoring.
- A UNICEF Regional Child Protection in Emergencies (CPI)E Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Specialist has been deployed to Samoa on 4th December to offer support to the Mental Health Unit of the MOH and MWCSO in the development of an integrated MHPSS emergency response to most affected children and caregivers. She will also train MWCSO outreach staff on MHPSS, using UNICEF ecological model and community-based approach.
- UNICEF is supporting the planning and development of key information and materials on psychosocial support/psychological first aid that is being led by MOH Mental Health Unit. UNICEF support is focused on content specifically for children drawing on existing materials from previous disasters (TC Pam, TC Winston) for adaptation as appropriate.
- Fifteen (15) tents provided by UNICEF have been installed in 12 hospitals and one health center. Five NEOC staff in Upolu and 6 MOH staff in Savai'i were trained in host to assemble and disassemble the tents.

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<sup>1</sup> including required diluent, auto destruct syringes, mixing syringes, and safety boxes

## TONGA

- On 22 October, the Tonga Ministry of Health declared a measles outbreak. The outbreak is characterized by transmission in boarding schools and has affected mainly teenage males and young adults. An interdisciplinary Epidemic Task Force conducts weekly measles response management meetings (See also SITREP 1 - 4).
- As at 06 December 2019, 458 cases of confirmed or suspected measles and no deaths have been recorded. The two recent new cases have been reported from Eua island. Currently none is hospitalised. Of all cases 363 (79%) occurred among adolescents and young people aged 10 to 24 years. Eighty-seven percent (87%) are in the island of Tongatapu. Since the beginning of this outbreak, 10 measles cases required hospitalization. The Ministry of Health administered in total (as at December 3) 15,124, vaccines 69% in Tongatapu island. *Source: Pacific Public Health Surveillance Network, Tonga, Situation Report 8, (04/11/2019) and daily briefings with MoH Tonga.*
- WHO has been providing public health technical support to Tonga via it's Country Office, has deployed three epidemiologists to the MoH and has established a surge pipeline for additional human resources.
- Since 1 October, UNICEF has delivered a total of 18,000 bundled doses of MCV to Tonga and 1,500 capsules of Vitamin A. Two ILRs are also on their way to Tonga. UNICEF is providing technical assistance in the area of effective vaccine management.

## FIJI

- On 7 November, the Fiji Ministry of Health and Medical Services declared a measles outbreak in the Serua-Namosi Subdivision, Central Division. (See also SITREP 1,2,3).
- Since the last update on 04 December, 18 cases of measles have been confirmed. To date, confirmed cases are from, or are linked to cases in Serua/Namosi Subdivision (12 cases from Wailali, Wainadoi, Navunikabi and Makosoi Deuba) from Suva (4 cases from Samabuka and Vatuwaqa) and Rewa (2 cases from Koronivia) subdivisions in the Central Division.
- Currently there are no hospitalisations from measles and no measles-related deaths have been reported. *Source: Ministry of Health & Medical Services, Latest Update - Measles.*  
[http://www.health.gov.fj/?page\\_id=7764](http://www.health.gov.fj/?page_id=7764)
- WHO and UNICEF have been providing the MHMS with risk communications technical support including the development of mass media material.
- Since 1 October 2019, UNICEF has delivered a total 335,000 bundled doses of measles-containing vaccine. UNICEF has ordered an additional 400,000 bundled doses of MR vaccine and 401,000 Vitamin A capsules with funding from Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Aus DFAT) and NZ MFAT scheduled to arrive in Fiji on December 8th and 9th.

## AMERICAN SAMOA

- As of November 26 American Samoa is reporting 4 confirmed cases of measles (2 laboratory confirmed, 2 clinical with epidemiological link). All four were travelers from Apia, Samoa, who developed symptoms after arrival in American Samoa.

## Preparedness activities

Various supplementary immunisation activities have been undertaken in all Pacific countries and areas. In support of these supplementary activities, UNICEF has delivered a total of 40,000 bundled doses of MCV as follows: 30,000 doses for Vanuatu, 1,000 doses for Nauru, 2,000 doses Niue, and 2,000 doses for Tokelau, and 4,500 for Tuvalu. At total of 71,860 additional bundled doses of MR vaccine are scheduled to be delivered by UNICEF this week as follows: 16,860 doses to Solomon Islands; 5,000 doses to Kiribati; and 50,000 doses to Vanuatu.

UNICEF is providing technical assistance to preparedness and supplementary immunisation activities, effective vaccine management, and data quality in Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, FSM and RMI.

## 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.

## Overview of Measles Containing Vaccines

Since 1 October 2019, UNICEF has delivered bundled measles containing vaccines to the following countries, Table 1:

**Table 1. MCV Country Delivery Update 6 December 2019**

Country	Total MCV received in country since 01st Oct (doses)	Scheduled Deliveries
Samoa	265,500	
Fiji	335,000	400,000
Tonga	18,000	0
Vanuatu	30,000	50,000
Kiribati	0	5,000
Nauru	1,000	
FSM	0	-
RMI	0	

<b>Solomon Islands</b>	0	16,860
<b>Cook Islands</b>	500	1,000
<b>Palau</b>	0	
<b>Niue</b>	2,000	
<b>Tokelau</b>	2,000	
<b>Tuvalu</b>	4,500	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>658,500</b>	<b>472,860</b>

\*All vaccine calculations include wastage of 15%

**British High Commission**

At the request of the Government of Samoa, the UK Secretary of State for International Development (DFID) has approved the deployment of a UK Emergency Medical Team (UK EMT) to respond to the measles outbreak in Samoa. Thirteen UK experts (paediatric doctors and nurses and an anaesthetist) arrived in Apia on Sunday 1 December and commenced work on Monday 2 December embedded within an existing Australian Medical Assistance Team (AusMAT) which is supporting the Tupua Tamasese Meaole Hospital in Apia.

**Government of Japan - JICA**

Following the decision by the Government of Japan, JICA dispatched an Infectious Diseases Response Team of the Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) composed of 1 MD, 1 Nurse and 2 support staff in Apia - Samoa. The team arrived on 4<sup>th</sup> December and started measles outbreak control activities on that same day. The emergency medical team (EMT) is cooperating with the Government of the Independent State of Samoa, relevant countries, and International Organizations.

[https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e\\_002714.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e_002714.html)  
[https://www.jica.go.jp/english/news/field/2019/20191202\\_41\\_en.html](https://www.jica.go.jp/english/news/field/2019/20191202_41_en.html)

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>