

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

## MEASLES OUTBREAK IN THE PACIFIC - SITUATION REPORT No 3 29 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. Under the new Orders of the State of Emergency declared by the Government on 15 November, vaccination was made mandatory for priority groups. Samoa activated its Health Emergency Operations Centre (HEOC) which meets daily for health sector coordination and to provide updates on the situation.
- Under the national orders, other restrictions have also been implemented including the restriction on inter-island travel for children under 19 years of age; the temporary closure of all schools; and children under 18 are strongly advised not to attend public gatherings or 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 November 28, the MoH confirms a total of 2,936 cases with 250 new cases reported within the last 24 hours. Of the 39 recorded deaths 90% (35), are children aged below five years. Of the 190 measles cases requiring hospitalization 82% have been admitted and currently hospitalised in Tupua Tamasese Meaole Hospital (TTMH) . Twenty-one children are critically ill in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). Most of the cases are reported from Faleata West and Vaimauga West Districts. During the Mass Vaccination Campaign that started on 20 November 2019, the Ministry of Health has vaccinated more than 44,907 individuals in both Upolu (77%) and Savaii (23%) islands. *Source: Government of Samoa Facebook.*  
<https://www.facebook.com/samoagovt/>

- UNICEF has delivered to Samoa a total of 115,500 bundled<sup>1</sup> doses of MCV since 1 October and 30,000 Vitamin A capsules. UNICEF is providing 50,000 bundled doses of MR vaccine which is scheduled to arrive in Apia on December 1st. UNICEF has ordered an additional 100,000 bundled doses of MR vaccine and 100,000 capsules of Vitamin A with funding from New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (NZ MFAT). Six units of ice-lined refrigerators (ILRs) and three emergency trolleys are in the pipeline. UNICEF has deployed one health and nutrition specialists, and one communication for development specialist and logistics specialist to provide technical assistance to government and augment the Samoa-based immunisation specialist and child protection officer.
- UNICEF's health and immunisation specialists have engaged in capacity building activities on implementing immunisation, immunisation campaigns, effective vaccine management, and immunisation data completeness and quality. UNICEF also provided input into the establishment of a new isolation clinic on Savaii.
- UNICEF and WHO have been providing technical support in the development of additional mass media campaign advertisements for radio, television and social media based on issues flagged at HEOC. A facilitation guide on key messages for community awareness on measles vaccination campaign teams has been finalized. UNICEF is also supporting the development of key information on psychosocial support which will be included as a component for community outreach programme (together with MOH Mental Health Unit, UNFPA et al).
- Eight 42 sqm tents have also delivered by UNICEF with an additional six 42 sqm tents and two 72 sqm tents scheduled to depart Nadi on November 29th for Apia. All 8 tents have been installed, two are at the Malietoa Tanufil II Hospital, one each in 5 district hospitals and one at a health center.
- WHO's support to Samoa regarding measles outbreak response 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 risk communication officer, and a health cluster coordinator to date. A psychosocial support expert will join the team to guide MOH in dealing with families affected by measles as well as health care workers. 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.
- Given the large measles caseload, there remain significant human resource shortfalls in the national referral hospital, as well as across Samoa's District Hospitals. The MoH estimates a need for at least 180 additional nurses for the national referral hospital alone. WHO has established a pipeline for additional human resources to support the health system.
- Incoming Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs) are now deploying to Samoa to fill critical human resource gaps and needs in the areas of pediatrics, intensive care, physiotherapy, mental and physiological support, logistics and patient transfer. Two EMTs - from Australia (AUSMAT) and New Zealand (NZMAT) - are already operational in the measles response in Samoa. In the

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

coming days, additional EMTs will be deploying from French Polynesia, the United Kingdom (UKMED), New Zealand (Counties Manukau and Pasifika Medical Association), and Japan to provide further surge support to the MoH. These EMTs are being coordinated through an EMT Coordination Cell (EMT-CC), led by the Ministry of Health and WHO.

- WHO is supporting the activation of a community immunization outreach programme via One UN project in collaboration with the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development and MOH.
- In collaboration with UNICEF, WHO supported procurement of MR vaccines and Vitamin A as well as delivery of human immunoglobulin donated by French Polynesia.

## **TONGA**

- On 22 October, the Tonga Ministry of Health declared a measles outbreak. The first cluster of cases in the current outbreak were teenage rugby players who had travelled to Auckland, NZ. The last measles in Tonga was in 2010.
- The outbreak is characterized by transmission in boarding 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 325 (82%) cases occurring in people aged 10 to 24 years. However, cases are now being seen more widely in other age groups.
- An interdisciplinary Epidemic Task Force conducts weekly measles response management meetings. To avoid further transmission of measles virus, schools remain closed since November 14 and the Ministry of Education decided to keep the schools closed to the end of the year. Other events involving mass gatherings (religious youth church gathering), have also been canceled. A large group of approximately 1,000 seasonal workers will be travelling in the coming months to Australia and New Zealand to work in agricultural settings.
- As of 28 November 2019, 413 cases of confirmed or suspected measles and no deaths have been recorded. Eighty-seven percent (87%) are in the island of Tongatapu, 11% in Vava'u island. Few cases have also been reported in 'Eua and Ha'apai islands (information on the cases locations are as of November 26). Since the beginning of this outbreak, nine measles cases required hospitalization. Currently, a two-month old baby is in the hospital. The Ministry of Health administered in total (as of 22/11/2019) 11,869 vaccines. *Source: Pacific Public Health Surveillance Network, Tonga, Situation Report 7, (27/11/2019)*
- Since 1 October, UNICEF has delivered a total of 12,000 bundled doses of MCV to Tonga. Two ILRs are also on their way to Tonga. An additional, 6,000 doses of MR vaccine are scheduled to arrive in Nadi on November 29th for onward forwarding to Tonga.
- WHO has been providing public health technical support to Tonga via its Country Office, has deployed three epidemiologists to the MoH 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.

- As of 29 November, 14 cases of measles have been confirmed. To date 11 of the confirmed cases are from, or are linked to cases in Serua/Namosi Subdivision (Wailali, Wainadoi, Navunikabi and Makosoi Deuba) and 3 are from Suva (Samabuka and Vatuwaqa) and Rewa (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. Press release, November 27.*  
<https://www.health.gov.fj/?cat=12>
- Triage sites are set up to assess and treat children, adults and pregnant mothers. Suspected cases continue to be reported, tested, and cleared when their results are confirmed negative by the National Public Health Laboratory. This includes an 11-year-old student of the Fiji School for the Blind, a suspected case who tested negative and was cleared, and a 1-year-old Kiribati national who also tested negative and was cleared.
- Current measles vaccine stocks are being reserved for the following high-risk target groups:
  - Children as per the routine national immunization schedule (at 12 months and 18 months of age) , including children who are not vaccinated with 2 doses of the vaccine as scheduled.
  - The residents of Serua/Namosi
- Health authorities are strongly advising against non-essential travel to Serua/Namosi.  
<http://www.health.gov.fj/?p=7792>
- Since 1 October 2019, UNICEF has delivered a total 135,000 bundled doses of measles-containing vaccine. UNICEF is providing 200,000 bundled doses of MR vaccine which is scheduled to be delivered on November 30th. 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.

## 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. 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
- Opportunistic vaccination of post-partum mothers
- Supplementary immunisation campaigns for measles are completed in Kiribati targeting ages 1-14 years and in Chuuk State of FSM. Solomon Islands is currently completing its MR campaign for children aged 6 months to under 6 years.
- Mass vaccination of high risk age groups is planned for Vanuatu, FSM, RMI, and Tuvalu. Kiribati and the Solomon Islands are also planning targeted vaccination to supplement recent SIAs.

- 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: the 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 bundled measles containing vaccines to the following countries:

<b>Country</b>	<b>Total MCV received in country since 01st Oct (doses)</b>
<b>Samoa</b>	115,500
<b>Fiji</b>	135,000
<b>Tonga</b>	12,000
<b>Solomon Islands</b>	0
<b>Nauru</b>	1,000
<b>FSM</b>	0
<b>RMI</b>	0
<b>Cook Islands</b>	500
<b>Palau</b>	0
<b>Niue</b>	1,000
<b>Tokelau</b>	1,500
<b>Tuvalu</b>	2,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>298,500</b>

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

#### **Other supplies provided by UNICEF**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Consignee</b>	<b>Status</b>
Vitamin A capsules	30,000 capsules	Samoa	Delivered
Vitamin A capsules	100,000	Samoa	Ordered

Ice-lined refrigerators (ILRs)	6 units	Samoa	ETA 3 December
Emergency trolleys	3 units	Samoa	ETA 3 December
42 sqm tent	14 sets	Samoa	8 delivered; 6 ETA 1 December
72 sqm tents	2 sets	Samoa	ETA 1 December
Ice-lined refrigerators (ILRs)	2 units	Tonga	ETA 3 December

## 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

### French Polynesia

Needs for immunoglobulin for about 20 children in Samoa will be covered by a stock that was made available from French Polynesia. The package arrived in Samoa in November 26. The teams are working on identified needs for equipment and medicines to be sent to Samoa as well as a team of health workers.

Following an exchange with the World Health Organization (WHO) on Samoa’s needs, human resources, particularly epidemiologists, public health doctors and risk communication experts, were identified as priority. Management of the needed vaccines, is being done in partnership with WHO and UNICEF.

To facilitate a swift response, a mission to assess Samoa’s needs on the ground was organized by the Government of French Polynesia. A needs assessment team composed of a public health doctor and a public health inspector from French Polynesia, went to Samoa on Friday, accompanied by a representative of the International and European affairs delegation.

This mission, prepared and monitored in coordination with the State services, will identify the needs of Samoa in its efforts to manage the crisis.” Source: *Press release from French Polynesia Presidency*. <https://www.presidence.pf/epidemie-de-rougeole-dans-la-region-pacifique-la-polynesie-francaise-intervient-aupres-de-la-population-de-samoa/>

### Pacific Community

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 (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/j/acZxLvmltF>