

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

MEASLES OUTBREAK IN THE PACIFIC - SITUATION REPORT No 6 December 10, 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 - 5)
- As of December 9, the MoH confirms a total of 4,693 cases with 112 new cases reported within the last 24 hours. Of all measles cases 52% (2,435) are children aged below five years. Of the 70 recorded deaths from measles, 87% (61), are children aged below five years. Of the 159 measles cases currently requiring hospitalization 75% are in Tupua Tamasese Meaole Hospital (TTMH). Sixteen children are critically ill in the Intensive Care Unit/High Dependency Unit (ICU). As at December 8, 2019, vaccination coverage for infants and children aged 6 months to 4 years is 85%. *Source: Government of Samoa, NEOC, PR 23, 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), Norway EMT, Japan EMT, US Hawaii EMT, Israel EMT, SPC-Solomon Islands/Kiribati teams, ADRA, Medecins Sans Frontieres, Save The Children, Yale University. 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.
- A total of 265,500 bundled doses of MCV have been delivered by UNICEF to Samoa since 1 October of which 100,000 doses were donated by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (NZ MFAT) and 135,000 Vitamin A capsules. Six units of ice-lined refrigerators (ILRs) and three emergency trolleys are in the pipeline.
- UNICEF currently has on the ground one MNCH Specialist, two risk communications/communication for development specialists, one child protection specialist and a senior emergency coordinator to provide technical assistance to government and augment the Samoa-based immunisation specialist and child protection officer.
- Following the two days of intensified mass vaccination, UNICEF and WHO are working with the MoH to conduct a rapid coverage assessment, augment surveillance and vaccinate those who may have been missed. UNICEF continues to provide technical assistance in the area of planning and implementation measles outbreak response activities including provision of outreach services, effective vaccine management, improving data quality, and supervision and monitoring. Importantly, UNICEF is working with the MoH to strengthen routine immunisation activities. UNICEF provided 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 is also leading the media monitoring for the risk communication team and capacity building for online/social media content forward planning and monitoring.
- UNICEF is supporting the Ministry of Women Community and Social Development (MWCSD) through continued capacity building sessions on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) with frontline staff and volunteers engaged in outreach activities in affected communities. The support and training program were agreed in collaboration with multiple stakeholders, including the Mental Health Unit under the Ministry of Health. The technical assistance covers self-care, psychological first aid, identification of mild and severe distress and referral mechanisms to focused and specialized services. 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.

- UNICEF has launched the procurement process for the following Biomedical devices requested by the MOH with estimated time of arrival in Apia by 15 December 2019:

| Short Description | Unit | Quantity Requested |
|---|------|--------------------|
| CPAP/BiPAP machine (Transport Ventilator) | pc | 10 |
| Patient Monitor | pc | 20 |
| ECG Machine | pc | 10 |
| Syringe Pump | pc | 30 |
| Nebulizer | pc | 11 |
| Pulse Oximeter | pc | 20 |

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 9 December 2019, 485 cases of confirmed or suspected measles and no deaths have been recorded. Currently none is hospitalised. Of all cases, 381 (83%) occurred among adolescents and young people aged 10 to 24 years. Most of the cases (88%), are reported in the island of Tongatapu. Since the beginning of this outbreak, 11 measles cases required hospitalization. As at December 3, the Ministry of Health administered in total 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. An additional 40,000 bundled doses are scheduled for dispatch this week. Two ILRs are also on their way to Tonga. UNICEF continues to provide technical assistance in the area of supervision, monitoring as well 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).
- In total, 18 confirmed cases of measles have been reported, the last two on December 4. 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
- The Ministry of Health and Medical Services is conducting an immunisation campaign targeting people who may not be fully immunised and are most at risk of measles infection. Close to 100,000 people around the country were vaccinated in the first phase of this campaign. This includes over 20,000 people in the outbreak area of Serua/Namosi. The second phase of this immunisation campaign began on Wednesday 4th December targeting children not received 2 doses of a measles vaccine as per the national immunisation schedule and children aged 12 and 18 months who are due their routine measles vaccine as per the national immunisation schedule, overseas travellers, health care workers, airport and hotel staff. In Central Division only, the campaign targeted children aged 6 months to 5 years, people born between 1980 and 2000 and all residents of Serua/Namosi aged 6 months and older.
<http://www.health.gov.fj/?p=7837>,
<https://www.facebook.com/MoHFiji/photos/a.392618697536342/1715828435215355/?type=3&theater>
- 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 735,000 bundled doses of measles-containing vaccine and 210,000 capsules of Vitamin A. The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Aus DFAT) and NZ MFAT funded a total of 400,000 bundled doses (200,000 bundled doses each) .

AMERICAN SAMOA

- As of November 26 American Samoa is reporting nine (9) confirmed measles cases of measles including three (3) contracted locally that have been confirmed by the laboratory. On December 8, the Office of the Governor declared a continuation of the public health emergency, declaring at the same time a state of emergency, activating the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) to assist and coordinate the response. Schools, kindergartens and Early Childhood Centres will remain closed until further notice, public gatherings are to be cancelled and pregnant women and children under one year old are asked to remain at home. Parents of unvaccinated children of 6 months and older are asked to bring their children for vaccination.
<https://www.americansamoa.gov/>,
https://6fe16cc8-c42f-411f-9950-4abb1763c703.filesusr.com/ugd/4bfff9_05e282298c104ddd9430fd38547b11e8.pdf

Preparedness activities

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. A summary of progress by country is below:

- Vanuatu: Started SIA on Efate December 9, microplanning for SIA on Tanna and Santo urban centers ongoing.
- FSM: Planning for phase 1 of SIA in Chuuk and Pohnpei States.
- RMI: House to house vaccination in Majuro and Ebeye completed for children under 5 yrs; ongoing for outer islands; catch up campaign in schools, vitamin A supplementation. Measles prevention measures in place include vaccination for travelers, frontline workers. Inspection measures at points of international entry.
- Solomon Islands: completed SIA on December 6th with estimated 97% coverage of under 6 years. planning for vaccination of any remaining susceptible groups, frontline workers and children who missed being vaccinated during the SIA.
- Kiribati: Introducing 'zero' dose for children 6 to 11 months. Tracing those children who were missed during the SIA and any defaulters. Vaccinating frontline workers. Phase II will be South Tarawa followed by Phase II in the Outer Islands.

Vaccinations to close immunity gaps in Tokelau, Tuvalu, Niue, Nauru and Cook Islands continues.

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 a total of 1,075,000 doses of bundled measles containing vaccines with an additional 151,180 scheduled for delivery this week. Details by country are found below in 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 | 735,000 | |
| Tonga | 18,000 | |
| Vanuatu | 80,000 | |
| Kiribati | 14,000 | |
| Nauru | 2,000 | |

| | | |
|------------------------|------------------|--------|
| FSM | 20,000 | |
| RMI | 2,500 | |
| Solomon Islands | 16,860 | 16,860 |
| Cook Islands | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| Niue | 2,000 | |
| Tokelau | 2,000 | |
| Tuvalu | 4,500 | |
| Totals | 1,163,360 | |

*All vaccine calculations include wastage of 15%

On Friday, 6th December 2019, Samoa officially launched its National Measles and Recovery Appeal. This Appeal is aimed towards getting support for Samoa's national efforts to contain the outbreak and immunize its population (herd immunity). The National Measles Response and Recovery Appeal can be viewed in its entirety [here](#):

<https://www.health.gov.ws/>,

<http://www.samoagovt.ws/2019/12/national-measles-response-and-recovery-appeal-6-december-2019/?fbclid=IwAR24cNss4ZBq4SpWBQxM5GD0AIS-XcjkD41itUtFVowCqldLy9xUXBZqeY>

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 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/5993964937>