May 11, 2010

News Release

For Immediate Release

Two Confirmed Measles Cases

The Springfield-Greene County Health Department is alerting the public of two confirmed cases of measles in the Greene County area. Measles is a highly infectious viral illness characterized by a fever, cough, runny nose, followed by a rash.

Before the introduction of the measles vaccine in 1963, approximately 500,000 cases were reported in the United States each year. Between 1997 and 2004, fewer than 150 total cases were reported for the United States. Most cases today are internationally imported.

Staff at the Springfield-Greene County Health Department reacted promptly by tracing contacts and protecting those exposed with vaccinations. Due to the period of infectiousness with measles, potential transmission of the virus to unknown susceptible persons may have occurred. Anyone who develops signs of the illness should limit their exposure to other people and call their healthcare provider prior to arriving in a clinic setting.

The vaccine is currently given at 12 to 15 months of age and 4 to 6 years of age. Anyone 18 years or older who was born after 1956 should get at least one dose of measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, unless they can show history of disease. Measles remains a leading vaccine-preventable killer of children worldwide.

For more information on the signs and symptoms of illness and how to protect yourself, call Kendra Williams at (417) 864-1408.