Te Aka Whai Ora
Māori Health Authority

He ngākau oranga – A call to action
MEASLES – URGENT ATTENTION TO IMMUNISATION

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For your:	Advice and Information	**Approved by**	Dr Rawiri McKree Jansen

Issue of concern: **Measles vaccination rate is dangerously low.**

Childhood immunisation rates have fallen below the level required to protect against outbreaks of measles.[1] Children's Commissioner Judge Frances Eivers has called Te Aka Whai Ora to action a rapid response from the health sector to equitably deliver childhood vaccines[2].

The Aotearoa/NZ measles outbreak in 2019 led to hundreds of hospital admissions and, very fortunately, no deaths. The MMR immunisation rate for Māori in Aotearoa/NZ is dangerously low, and the overall immunisation rate is below that required for herd immunity. The outbreak was transported to Samoa, where a lower immunisation rate was associated with tragic results.

You will no doubt be aware of your responsibilities to maintain a register of vaccination status. The register is **critically important** during a measles outbreak to reduce the risk of spread and keep tamariki safe. We appreciate that it is the end of the year and COVID fatigue is very real, but the concerns for our tamariki are so significant that we are asking for your support, particularly as you plan for the New Year.

Request

Please update the vaccination register. Where the vaccination status of a child is incompletely vaccinated or not known, supportive, non-judgemental conversations with whānau from a trusted person can make a real difference in their decision to become vaccinated. If whānau ask for access to information about immunisation or access to vaccination services, it must be provided in a culturally safe manner.

1. Education leaders and managers should urgently ensure children who are incompletely vaccinated are identified, and whānau are supported with appropriate communications, and suitable vaccination information.

Monitoring

2. Te Aka Whai Ora will continue to monitor immunisation rates.

Te Aka Whai Ora will work with ECE to review and publish immunisation rates at regional and district levels. In the interim, please find **attached** a map of your centre's surrounding area. The objective is to provide you with a personalised map of the vaccination rates around your rohe to accompany your local knowledge and register. Also, to help make decisions around supporting prevention as well as in the event of an outbreak.

Lifting childhood immunisation rates is our top priority. The role of ECE/Kōhanga Reo is part of a broader programme of work between Te Aka Whai Ora and Te Whatu Ora. We will provide updates next month.

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[1] Johnson R, Proactive immunisation for Māori tamariki will save lives, GP Pulse 3 August 2022
[2] https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/130677063/warning-over-spike-in-diseases-as-childhood-immunisation-falls