

2 VACCINE-PREVENTABLE DISEASES

a Measles in Western Cape Province

The NICD, National Department of Health (NDOH) and Western Cape provincial and district authorities are working together to contain a measles outbreak in the Stellenbosch sub-District of the Cape Winelands. A single case in a high school learner in a Stellenbosch school was diagnosed and reported in mid-January 2017, followed by 5 cases within the next two weeks. Three schools were identified for an immediate measles vaccination campaign and over 2,000 consenting learners and staff members were vaccinated on Friday 3rd February 2017. As of 22 February, 22 laboratory-confirmed cases have been identified (Figure 3), all but one of which have an identifiable association with the school. A provincial wide vaccination campaign is currently being planned by the Western Cape Provincial government together with the support of the NDOH, starting with children under-five in high-risk communities.

Health care workers across the country are advised to be on the alert and to submit a blood sample together with a completed case investigation form (available on the NICD website) for measles testing to their laboratory for all suspected measles cases. Health practitioners should also notify their district Communicable Diseases Co-ordinator or the Infection Prevention and Control officer of their

local private or public hospital telephonically, if they suspect a case.

The case definition of a suspected measles case is: Any person with a fever of 38°C or more,

AND

a generalised maculo-papular rash, with any of:

- cough;
- conjunctivitis (red eyes) and
- coryza (runny nose)

Parents are advised to be sure that their children are up to date with their vaccinations. In the public sector, measles vaccination is given free of charge at 6 months of age, with a booster at 12 months. For persons who have missed a dose of measles vaccine – it is never too late to catch up! In the private sector, measles vaccination is available as part of the 'MMR' (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccine between 12-18 months of age. For more formation on measles and measles vaccination, please visit the NICD website: www.nicd.ac.za.

Source: Division of Public Health Surveillance and Response and Centre for Vaccines and Immunity NICD -NHLS (melindas@nicd.ac.za); Western Cape

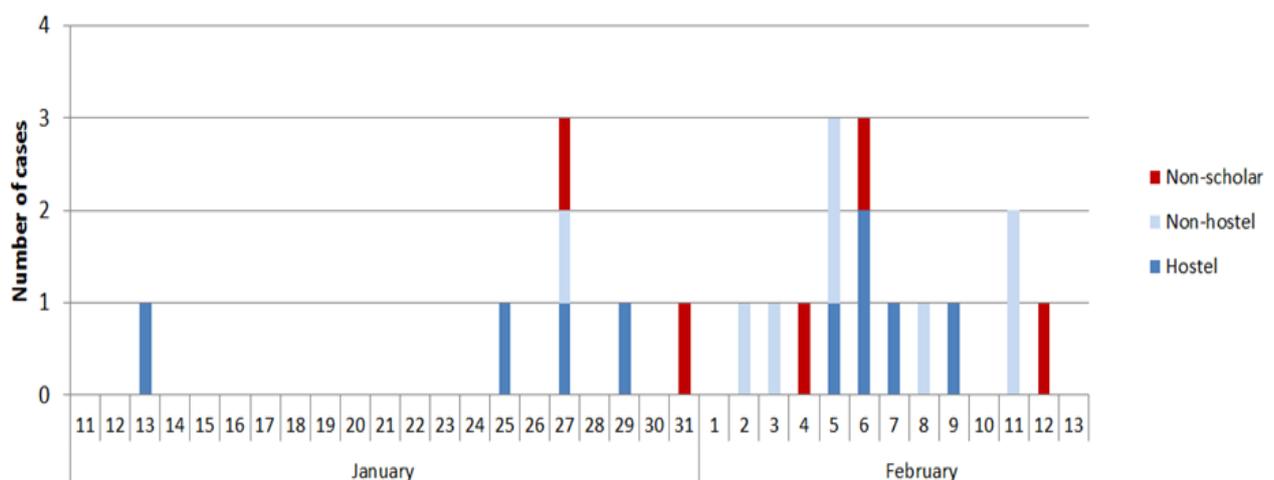


Figure 3. An epidemiological curve illustrating the number of laboratory-confirmed measles cases as of 22 February 2017 identified at a school in the Western Cape Province, January-February 2017.