CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS
STAFF REPORT

To: Honorable Mayor and City Council

From: Pamela Mottice-Muller, Director of Emergency Management

Date: July 20, 2010

Subject: Public Health Advisory: Mumps Cases on the Rise in Los Angeles

Attachments: Bikur Cholim Press Release: Mumps on the Rise, May 17, 2010

INTRODUCTION

City of Beverly Hills Mayor Delshad received information from the Bikur Cholim Jewish Healthcare Foundation regarding the recent increase of mumps cases in the Los Angeles Jewish Community. Mayor Delshad requested that the Health and Safety Commission study this issue and report back to the City Council. The Commission reviewed and discussed this issue during the June 28 Health and Safety Commission meeting. The Commission decided to make a statement regarding the importance of being informed about disease outbreaks and receiving vaccinations in order to prevent mumps and other communicable diseases. Community members are encouraged to contact their personal health care provider for more information and to receive vaccinations.

DISCUSSION

The L.A. County Department of Public Health recently issued advisories regarding the increase in cases of mumps in the County. The orthodox Jewish community was particularly impacted by the increase of this highly contagious disease. According to Jonathan Fielding, L.A. County Director of Public Health, six cases of the mumps have been confirmed as of May 17, 2010. This is compared to seven confirmed cases in all of 2009. Articles in the Beverly Hills Courier, L.A. Times and press releases from the L.A. County Department of Public Health have raised community awareness about this issue.

Mumps is not the only vaccine-preventable disease that is on the rise in L.A. County. Most notably, there have been increases in cases of whooping cough (pertussis) this year. In the first six months of 2010, two infants died due to whooping cough. This is compared to an average of zero to one whooping cough deaths per year in L.A. County.

Safe and effective vaccines which prevent disease are available for both mumps and whooping cough. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and L.A. County Department of Public Health, among other health professionals, recommend immunizing children against these preventable diseases. Conversations with representatives from the L.A. County Department of Public Health revealed that the increase in mumps and whooping cough in L.A. County may be related to individuals choosing to not immunize their children.

According to the CDC, immunizations protect the community and individuals from serious, potentially fatal, communicable diseases. Immunizations protect the people being vaccinated as well as reduce vulnerable populations' risk of exposure to infectious diseases. Infants, individuals with underlying medical conditions and others who cannot be vaccinated are considered vulnerable populations. In general, the CDC and L.A. County Department of Public Health recommend that all children receive the MMRV (measles, mumps, rubella and varicella) and DTP (diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis) immunizations. It is possible for adults who have not been vaccinated or who need booster shots to catch up on their immunizations.

The Health and Safety Commission recommends that community members speak to their personal health care providers regarding concerns about immunizations and to receive vaccines. L.A. County offers assistance for those individuals who do not have a regular health care provider or insurance coverage for vaccines. Interested individuals can get more information by dialing 211 or visiting www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip.

FISCAL IMPACT

None

RECOMMENDATION

The Health and Safety Commission recommends that the City provide information regarding vaccine-preventable diseases to community members. Community members should be encouraged to be informed about this issue and to seek more information from their personal health care provider. Links to sources of information regarding this topic will be added to the City's website. In addition, staff will include information about vaccines and vaccine-preventable diseases in their community outreach for flu season this fall.

Attachment 1

From: Mumps Alert - Bikur Cholim [mailto:info@bikurcholim.net]
Sent: Monday, May 17, 2010 4:45 PM
To: jimdelshad@aol.com
Subject: Mumps on the Rise in Los Angeles Jewish Community

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mumps on the Rise in Los Angeles Jewish Community
Los Angeles – Monday 5/17/10

Bikur Cholim has been monitoring the outbreak of mumps within the East Coast Jewish communities as early as last year, and its potential spread to other Jewish communities in the US. To those familiar with the socialization and frequency of transcontinental flights between these two regions, the spread of mumps to Los Angeles comes as no surprise. While data regarding the source, propagation, and number of mumps cases in Los Angeles is useful for epidemiology studies, the attention of all health officials and physicians is focused on treatment, limiting transmission, and reinforcing the importance of childhood immunizations.

Over recent weeks, several articles have surfaced citing the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health publicizing cases of mumps in Los Angeles, particularly within the Jewish community. Efforts are being made to collect data and monitor this as closely as possible. Today, there have been 8 confirmed mumps cases with additional cases under review. From the onset, and as recently as last week, information coming from New York has identified the "Hasidic" population as the group associated with this mumps outbreak. Unfortunately this does not adequately sensitize the entire Jewish community to this threat. While these cases may have in fact begun in a Hasidic setting, it is without question that this has passed beyond these boundaries and significantly spread throughout the observant Jewish community. Bikur Cholim has worked closely with Los Angeles health officials to ensure their language does not solely identify this outbreak as "Hasidic" but rather to include the Jewish community as a whole.

Per the Center for Disease Control (CDC), without vaccines, epidemics of many preventable diseases could return resulting in increased and unnecessary illness, disability, and death among children. There are currently 15 vaccine-preventable diseases including mumps, measles, and rubella (MMR) and adults whom were never vaccinated can receive the MMR vaccine at any age.

The transmission and spreads of mumps is of major concern to public health and Los Angeles physicians are mandated to report all cases of mumps to the Department of Health. Due to its highly communicable nature, children and adults diagnosed with mumps should not attend school or have contact with other individuals during the communicable period.

Bikur Cholim president Rabbi Hershy Ten expressed, "With more parents exercising the "personal belief" exemption and not immunizing their children, the risk of exposure and contracting these diseases increases. The decision not to immunize goes beyond effecting one's own child and family, it directly impacts society. For example, children not immunized for measles and rubella that contract these diseases can place pregnant women, such as teachers and day care providers, and their unborn children at risk."

Mumps is not a Jewish disease nor is it specific to any religious or ethnic group. Childhood immunizations are the single most effective way to protect children and adults from these diseases. Those parents whom are doubtful of the benefits of immunization should speak with their pediatricians. For years now, public health officials have offered low-cost and free vaccinations at LA County clinics which can be found at www.lapublichealth.org. Those exhibiting symptoms such as swollen/tender salivary glands under the ears or jaws on both sides of the face, dry mouth, painful chewing/swallowing, headache, fever, muscle aches etc. should contact their family physician.

Bikur Cholim (www.bikurcholim.net) is working together with health officials to provide information to all schools and organizations within the Los Angeles Jewish community for them to share with their parent bodies and memberships.

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