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## County Executive's Corner: "We Will Not Wait"

By rctadmin on April 18, 2019 · 0 Comments



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### By County Executive Ed Day

29 weeks; for more than half a year we have been combatting the measles outbreak here in Rockland and despite case totals continuing to increase we have seen success. 18,824 MMR immunizations have been given county-wide over the last 6 months. The majority of schools in our area have reached a 95% MMR vaccination rate, the rate required for "herd immunity" which will help us limit the spread of any future outbreaks.

Rockland has faced criticism lately for the preventative actions our Commissioner of Health Dr. Ruppert and I have taken to protect the public health. But to those who disagree I ask what is the standard that you would apply to this situation? To be told that we should wait for someone to die because of this disease is grotesque. Should we wait for that

or even hundreds more people to fall ill?

We declared the State of Emergency 3 weeks ago to prevent illness, to encourage vaccination and to protect the health and safety of our residents, especially those who are unable to be vaccinated due to age, pregnancy or being immunocompromised.

We timed our declaration because we recognized the confluence of many events including the upcoming Easter and Passover holy days. This concern was recently affirmed by Chief Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, the President of the Conference of European Rabbis.

It is unacceptable to sit back and do nothing as more of our residents fall ill to this deadly disease and court decisions aside, we will never do that. In 2017, measles killed 110,000 people worldwide, mostly children under the age of 5. And while we have thankfully not seen a death here in Rockland





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we have seen multiple hospitalizations, five cases that went to the ICU including an infant and even a premature birth caused by measles.

Working toward the end of this crisis our Commissioner of Health, Dr. Ruppert, has issued two new Orders that will be used moving forward in dealing with the measles outbreak.

The first is a RCDOH Communicable Disease & Exposure Exclusion Order, which is a Commissioner's Order, and which has three components:

1. Any person diagnosed with the measles or exposed to a person diagnosed with the measles as evidenced by laboratory evidence or a measles tracing investigation conducted by RCDOH must be excluded from indoor and outdoor places of public assembly located in Rockland County for a period of up to 21 days.
2. The individual is prohibited from going to or being present at any place of public assembly for any period of time with exceptions for medical care, emergency situations and court appointments.
3. Individuals are required to cooperate with RCDOH public health authorities by providing information regarding details of one's illness, exposures and contacts.

Failure to comply can result in a \$2,000 fine per violation per day. Parents and guardians served with this order on behalf of an exposed minor are responsible for compliance by their child.

The second Order involves students who are required to have the proper MMR immunizations and to date have not demonstrated that the vaccines have been administered.

1. Pursuant to an audit conducted by NYSDOH/RCDOH, students have been identified as having neither a valid certificate of immunization on file for MMR vaccine or laboratory evidence of immunity against measles, mumps and rubella, nor a valid medical or religious exemption on file.
2. A notarized affidavit sworn under penalty of perjury or if unable to take an oath, a notarized affirmation affirmed under penalties of perjury, identifying students who have been excluded from the school/day care is required according to this order.

Failure to comply can result in a \$2,000 fine per violation per day. These Orders to affected schools were delivered as of April 16, 2019.

Remember, this is not the "mild childhood disease" that those in the anti-vaxx community make it out to be. The dangers and complications of measles far outweigh any of the extremely unlikely side





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effects of the vaccine itself.

What I want to leave with the people of Rockland is that we will not quit, and we will not take a back seat when it comes to their health. We will use every tool at our disposal and do so regardless of opposition or distractions. That is our responsibility and we will conquer the challenge that is in front of us.

<https://www.rocklandtimes.com/2019/04/18/county-executives-corner-we-will-not-wait/>

