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## **MEDIA ALERT – The Immunization Partnership (TIP) Response to Gaines County Measles Outbreak**

### **What We Know - Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Reports (as of Feb 12):**

- 24 cases of measles confirmed in Gaines County / All cases are among unvaccinated individuals
  - Age breakdown: 0-4 years (6 cases), 5-17 years (16 cases), 18+ years (2 cases)
- 9 hospitalizations
- DSHS has also confirmed measles cases in Terry County (exact number unknown).

**Gaines County has one of the lowest childhood vaccination rates in Texas.** In the 2023-2024 school year, Gaines County had the lowest kindergarten MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccination rate (81.97%) among several West Texas counties, significantly trailing behind Lubbock (92.95%), Ector (Odessa) (91.28%), and Midland (94.77%). At least 95% vaccination coverage is needed to prevent measles outbreaks and protect vulnerable populations. (CDC, WHO).

### **The Immunization Partnership's (TIP) Response to the Outbreak**

TIP is dedicated to protecting communities by promoting vaccine education and access, and is working with local health departments in West Texas to spread the word that:

- Families should check their children's vaccination status immediately.
- Parents should call their doctor or pediatrician if their child shows symptoms or visit their doctor or local clinic if they need vaccine.
- Families should contact their county health agency for more information:
  - **South Plains Public Health District** (Gaines, Yoakum, Terry, and Dawson Counties)
    - Clinics in Seminole, LaMesa, Denver City, Brownfield
    - 800-360-6510 / <https://southplainshealth.org/locations/>
  - **City of Lubbock Public Health Department**
    - (806) 775-2933
    - The City of Lubbock Public Health Department is hosting a free drive-up measles-mumps-rubella vaccine clinic this Thursday and next Tuesday through Thursday.
- TIP is supporting outreach by providing flyers for schools and churches and distributing digital materials to raise awareness about vaccines and the symptoms of measles in Gaines County and West Texas. A West Texas school or church needing these electronic resources should contact [info@immunizeusa.org](mailto:info@immunizeusa.org) or call 281-400-3689 / press 5.

### **From TIP Executive Director Terri Burke:**

As an organization dedicated to protecting school vaccine requirements, we are deeply concerned by this outbreak and are wishing the children and families involved a full and swift recovery. Measles isn't just a rash—it can cause pneumonia, brain swelling, blindness, and even death, especially in young children. The MMR vaccine has been used for decades, is proven safe, and protects not just your child but everyone around them. As lawmakers attempt to weaken school vaccine requirements and misinformation leads more parents to opt out of vaccinating their children across the state, our children's safety is at risk, increasing the chances of deadly outbreaks that disrupt families and close classrooms. Texans take care of Texans, and strong immunization policies ensure that every child has the freedom to learn in a safe and healthy environment, free from preventable diseases that should have been left in the past.

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