

May 3, 2005

2005/nr-038

NEW MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH APPOINTED TO MANAGE RUBELLA OUTBREAK

Number Of Confirmed Cases of Rubella Increases

TORONTO – Ontario’s Chief Medical Officer of Health today appointed Dr. Doug Sider as Medical Officer of Health of the Oxford County Board of Health to investigate and control the spread of the rubella (German measles) in the area.

Today’s appointment came as the number of confirmed cases of rubella increased to 56 from the 50 reported on April 29. These include 54 cases in Oxford County, one in Brant County and one in Haldimand-Norfolk County.

“As part of our response, I have appointed Dr. Doug Sider to oversee the control and management of this outbreak,” said Dr. Sheela Basrur, Ontario’s Chief Medical Officer of Health. “Dr. Sider has the necessary experience to deal with an outbreak of this kind and ensure the best possible health outcomes for people in the affected areas.”

Effective today, Sider, who is also the Associate Medical Officer of Health in the Regional Niagara Public Health Department, will co-ordinate the outbreak investigation and control measures with other jurisdictions, including Brant County Health Unit and Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit.

Ontario’s chief medical officer of health has the authority, under Section 86 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act, to take appropriate action to prevent, eliminate or reduce health risks in Ontario, including the appointment of a medical officer of health.

Rubella symptoms include a mild rash, low-grade fever and swollen glands and is a relatively mild illness for children. However, rubella in an unimmunized pregnant woman – especially during the first 11 weeks of pregnancy – may cause infection in the fetus, leading to birth defects, fetal death, or miscarriage.

Basrur urged all women who are contemplating pregnancy to ensure they have been immunized against rubella. Pregnant women who believe they may have been exposed to a person with rubella symptoms should seek medical advice.

Rubella is highly contagious and is spread from person-to-person through droplets from the mouth and nose. Those with rubella are considered infectious from seven days before the onset of a rash to seven days after a rash has appeared.

Most people have been vaccinated against rubella and should be protected from the disease. The measles, mumps, rubella vaccination is part of the routine vaccinations available free to all children in the province.

For more information on rubella, call Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 (TTY line is 1-866-797-0007).

For further information:

Members of the media:

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(416) 314-6197

Members of the general public: (416) 327-4327, or (800) 268-1154

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