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PRESS RELEASE – For Immediate Release

Health District Ends Investigation Into Gooding Group Exposed To Measles Virus

(GOODING COUNTY) South Central Public Health District (SCPHD) is ending the investigation into nearly 50 people exposed to the measles virus while traveling in Seattle, Washington last month. A team of nurses and epidemiologists interviewed each person exposed, and monitored their health over the last two weeks.

“None of the patients developed measles symptoms and the incubation period is now over. That means there is no more measles risk for the group unless they are exposed to the disease again.” said Cheryle Becker, SCPHD Public Health Division Administrator.

During the investigation, the epidemiology team confirmed 42 of the 48 people in Gooding exposed to measles had at least one MMR shot, the vaccine given to protect against measles, mumps and rubella. The remaining six patients were confident they had also received the vaccination, but did not have an immunization record.

“Immunization is likely the reason none of these people got sick,” Becker said. “By the time you start showing symptoms it is too late to vaccinate. That’s why we urge families to immunize before an outbreak hits their community. The fact that most, if not all, of these travelers were immunized may have protected our entire community from a measles outbreak.”

SCPHD will continue to monitor for any disease outbreaks in south-central Idaho. With the summer travel season starting this weekend, this travel exposure to measles shows how easily this disease could be transmitted to our local area. The public health district urges residents to check their immunization records and confirm they are protected against measles and any other disease they may be exposed to **several weeks before exposure**. If families are planning to travel out of country this summer they can call the public health district to learn what vaccines they should receive before they leave.

Children should receive their first dose of measles vaccine between 12 and 15 months of age; another dose at 4-6 years of age. Measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine is generally first given at 12 months of age in the United States, but is sometimes recommended for children as young as 6 months of age who are traveling outside the United States or could be infected in an outbreak.

For more information on measles, visit phd5.idaho.gov/Disease/MeaslesTraveler.html or www.cdc.gov/measles. To learn more about vaccines you’ll need before leaving the country visit <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list>. Call SCPHD or your health care provider to set up an appointment for immunizations.