

Measles Epidemiological Summary, British Columbia 2019 year to date – March 18th

Measles is a highly contagious, acute viral illness preventable by measles vaccine. From 2013 through 2017, there were less than five confirmed cases of measles annually in British Columbia (BC). In 2018, nine cases of measles were reported; three of these cases were out of country residents visiting BC.

Measles in BC in 2019

As of March 18th, nineteen confirmed cases of measles have been reported in 2019 amongst BC residents. None have been linked to the measles outbreak in Washington State, with the epicentre in Clark County, which began January 1, 2019.¹

Two cases with rash onset in January and one case in February, respectively, were adults who acquired measles during travel to the Philippines, where a large measles outbreak is ongoing.² A separate case with no out-of-country travel occurred in February.³ While this case had no clear epidemiologic links to earlier BC cases, the measles virus genotype is B3, as for the earlier cases imported from the Philippines.⁴

In a separate series of events beginning in late January, three school-age children who acquired measles infection while traveling in Vietnam returned to Vancouver. They developed symptoms immediately prior to travel or upon return, and resulted in transmission to 5 other students. An additional 6 cases have been identified among those exposed in medical settings or households. The measles virus genotype associated with this outbreak is D8.⁴

In an event unrelated to the above outbreak, a Canadian traveler returning from the Philippines to the Northwest Territories transited through Vancouver International Airport, overnighing in Richmond from February 11th through 12th, resulting in public notification about potential exposures. This case is not counted as a BC case.

In March, one measles case was reported in a resident of Interior Health Authority region, with travel history compatible with acquisition in the United States. This is the only case of measles in a resident outside of the lower mainland region of BC to date in 2019.

¹ For information on the measles outbreak in Washington State:

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/IllnessandDisease/Measles/MeaslesOutbreak>

² For information on the measles outbreak in the Philippines:

<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/travel-health-notices/195>

³ For exposure information from Vancouver Coastal Health:

<http://www.vch.ca/about-us/news/news-releases>

⁴ Source: National Microbiology Laboratory, Public Health Agency of Canada

Table 1: Confirmed cases of measles by age group, British Columbia, 2019 to March 18

| Age Group | Number of Confirmed Cases |
|----------------|---------------------------|
| <1 year | 0 |
| 1 to 4 years | 1 |
| 5 to 9 years | 0 |
| 10 to 19 years | 12 |
| 20 to 29 years | 3 |
| 30 to 39 years | 2 |
| 40 to 49 years | 1 |
| Total | 19 |

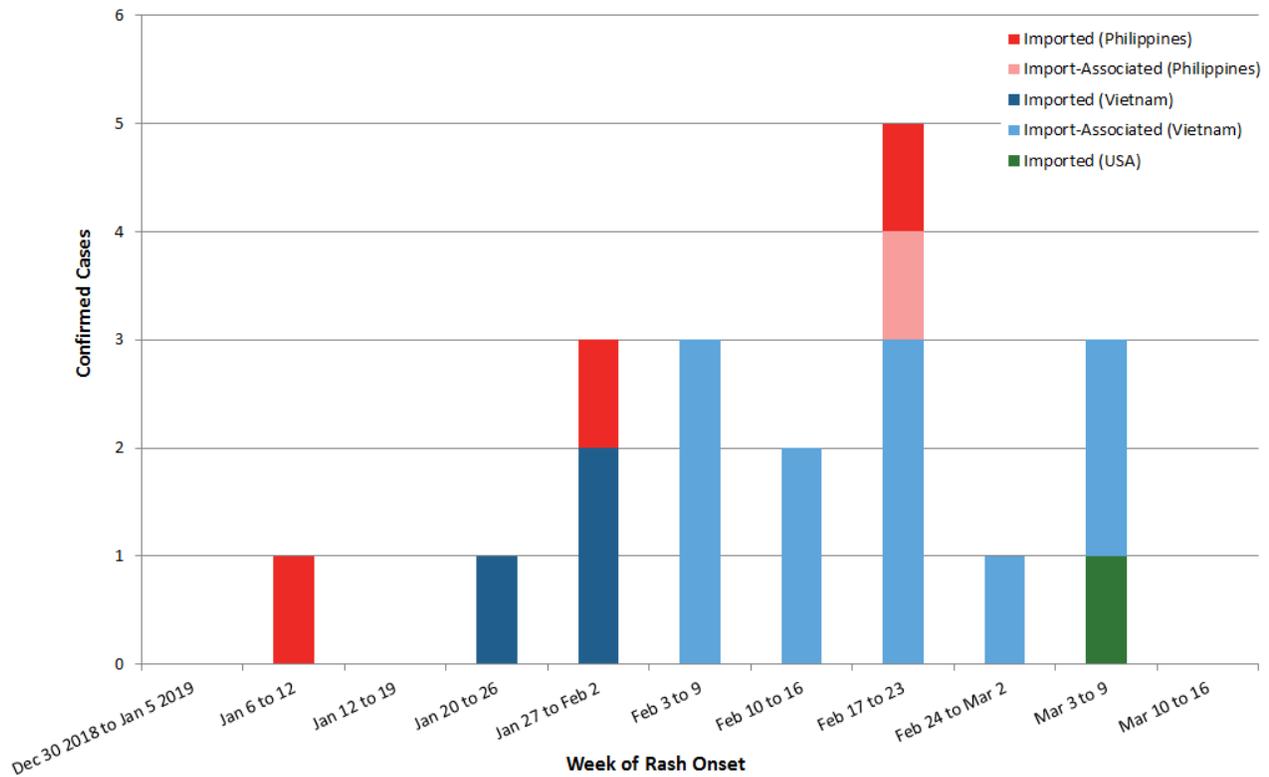


Figure 1: Confirmed cases of measles by epidemiological week, British Columbia, 2019 to March 18

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