

Memorandum

PHD-C 2-2026

Subject: Response to the Ontario Measles Outbreak

Date: February 10, 2026

To: Public Health and Social Services Committee

From: Rachel McBride, Manager, Infectious Diseases

Measles re-emerged as a significant public health challenge in Ontario during 2024-2025. Measles is a highly contagious infection and can spread easily through the air and close contact with an infected person. Reducing the transmission and impact of measles needs a strong prevention and response system in place.

Ontario recently experienced one of the largest measles outbreaks in decades, with 2,376 outbreak-related cases reported across 26 Public Health Units. The outbreak began on October 28, 2024, after exposure to a travel-related case from New Brunswick, and transmission continued for more than 12 months in Ontario and other provinces. This sustained spread ultimately resulted in Canada losing its measles elimination status in November 2025.

In Niagara, there were 13 outbreak-related cases that required timely and detailed follow-up. In addition to managing these confirmed cases, Public Health staff supported the investigation and monitoring of 250 contacts and assessed 94 suspect measles cases. The volume and urgency of this work demanded rapid response, extended hours, and the temporary reallocation of staff from other program areas to ensure timely and effective case and contact management.

Niagara's experience with measles was successful in demonstrating the ability to protect the community from highly contagious diseases. Responding to the provincial measles outbreak at a local level took a collaborative approach, working closely with partners such as school boards, health care providers, hospitals, daycares, Ministry of Health, and other Public Health Units. This collaboration ensured consistent messaging, coordination, and strengthened the overall response locally.

Although the provincial outbreak has ended, sporadic cases continue across Canada and globally. Niagara Region Public Health remains vigilant, promoting vaccination, promptly investigating suspected and confirmed cases, and managing contacts to protect the community.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Rachel McBride
Manager, Infectious Diseases