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**MUMPS VACCINATION OPPORTUNITY FOR YUKONERS UP TO THE AGE OF 36**

WHITEHORSE – Health and Social Services Minister Brad Cathers today announced that the government will offer a vaccination opportunity for all Yukoners, up to 36 years of age, to receive a second dose of mumps vaccine in the form of Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine.

“Since 1996, the Yukon’s infant and children’s immunization program has included a double dose of MMR vaccine to protect against measles, mumps and rubella, but a recent mumps outbreak in the United States has prompted the Medical Health Officer and the Communicable Disease Officer to recommend a second dose of MMR vaccine for those who did not receive it previously,” Cathers said.

The mumps virus is spread by coughing, sneezing and intimate contact, such as kissing. It can also be transmitted from saliva on the surface of items such as toys. Fever, headaches and a swelling of the salivary glands, or cheeks, are common. Less frequently, mumps can cause painful swelling of the testicles in younger men and relatively mild inflammation of the lining of the brain (aseptic meningitis).

“Most older adults over 36 will have had the disease and younger children will have received the second vaccine of MMR,” Yukon’s Medical Health Officer Bryce Larke said. “We do, however, have a group of individuals up to 36 years of age, who may not be as fully protected because they did not receive that second dose of vaccine.”

“This opportunity should serve as a reminder that Yukoners younger than 15 years should get the vaccine to ensure they have received their second dose of MMR,” Larke added.

Whitehorse Health Centre will be holding special immunization clinics June 29 and 30 from noon to 4:30 pm. Regular immunization drop-in times during the summer, run Monday to Friday from 8 to 8:30 a.m. and 3 to 4 p.m. Contact your local community health centre for information on obtaining the vaccine.

For more information on mumps or on MMR vaccine, contact Yukon Communicable Disease Control at 667-8323.

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