



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE  
Oxiris Barbot, M.D.  
*Commissioner*

## ORDER OF THE COMMISSIONER

**TO: All persons who reside, work or attend school in the neighborhood of Williamsburg, Brooklyn, New York and to the parents and/or guardians of any child who resides, works or attends school in the neighborhood of Williamsburg, Brooklyn, New York**

**WHEREAS**, there is an active outbreak of measles among people residing in the neighborhood of Williamsburg in Brooklyn, New York who live within zip codes 11205, 11206, 11211 and 11249. Since September 2018, more than 250 cases of measles have been documented among people living in Williamsburg and that number continues to grow as new cases are still occurring; and

**WHEREAS**, measles is a highly contagious viral disease that can result in serious health complications, such as pneumonia and swelling of the brain. About a third of reported measles cases have at least one complication and in some cases, measles can cause death. Measles can be serious in all age groups. However, infants, young children, pregnant persons, people whose immune systems are weak and adults are more likely to suffer from measles complications; and

**WHEREAS**, measles is easily transmitted from a sickened person to others who lack immunity to the disease. The virus can live for up to two hours in air or on surfaces where an infected person coughed or sneezed and people who lack immunity are highly likely to become sick if they are in contact with an infectious person or near where an infectious person recently has been; and

**WHEREAS**, although measles is highly contagious, the Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR) vaccine is an effective and safe vaccine that will prevent its transmission. While measles remains one of the leading causes of death among young children in parts of the world where the vaccination is not available, the disease until this outbreak was largely eliminated in the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, the measles outbreak persists in Williamsburg despite other efforts taken by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to stop it, including orders excluding unvaccinated children from attending preschools and daycare programs, because a high rate of people living within Williamsburg have not been vaccinated against measles; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to section 556 of the Charter of the City of New York, the Department is responsible for controlling communicable diseases within the City of New York and for supervising the abatement of nuisances that affect or are likely to affect the public health; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to section 3.01 of the New York City Health Code, I am authorized to declare a public health emergency and issue orders and take actions that I deem

necessary for the health and safety of the City and its residents when urgent public health action is necessary to protect the public health against an existing threat; and

**WHEREAS**, I find the ongoing measles outbreak in Williamsburg to be an existing threat to public health in the City of New York; and

**WHEREAS**, I also find that the presence of any person in Williamsburg lacking the MMR vaccine, unless that vaccine is otherwise medically contra-indicated or such person has demonstrated immunity against measles, creates an unnecessary and avoidable risk of continuing the outbreak and is therefore a nuisance, as defined in New York City Administrative Code §17-142; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to New York City Health Code §3.07, no person “shall do or assist in any act which is or may be detrimental to the public health or to the life or health of any individual... or ...shall fail to do any reasonable act or take any necessary precaution to protect human life and health.”

**IT IS HEREBY ORDERED** that any person who lives, works or resides within the 11205, 11206, 11211 and/or 11249 zip codes and who has not received the MMR vaccine within forty eight (48) hours of this Order being signed by me shall be vaccinated against measles unless such person can demonstrate immunity to the disease or document to the satisfaction of the Department that he or she should be medically exempt from this requirement.

**IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that the parent or guardian of any child older than six months of age who lives, works or resides within the 11205, 11206, 11211 and/or 11249 zip codes and who has not received the MMR vaccine within forty eight (48) hours of this order being signed by me shall cause such child to be vaccinated against measles unless such parent or guardian can demonstrate that the child has immunity to the disease or document that he or she should be medically exempt from this requirement.

**THIS ORDER** shall remain in effect until the next meeting of the New York City Board of Health scheduled for April 17, 2019 at which time it may be continued or rescinded by the Board.



Dated: April 9, 2019

Oxiris Barbot, M.D.  
Commissioner of Health

**WARNING**

Failure to comply with this Order is a violation of §3.05 of the New York City Health Code, and a misdemeanor for which you may be subject to civil and/or criminal fines, forfeitures and penalties, including imprisonment.

Anyone wishing to object to the order, please write or fax Thomas G. Merrill, General Counsel, New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, 42-09 28th Street (WS 14-38) Long Island City NY 11101-4132; [tmerrill@health.nyc.gov](mailto:tmerrill@health.nyc.gov) telephone: 347-396-6116; fax: 347-396-6087, providing a statement of the reasons for your objection to the order. If you have any questions about how to comply with this Order, please telephone Jane R. Zucker, M.D., M.Sc., Assistant Commissioner, Bureau of Immunization at 347-396-2471.