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COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE



Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

February 9, 2015

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Dr. Tom Frieden
Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30329

Dear Dr. Frieden,

As members of California's Congressional Delegation, we respectfully write to you today to urge CDC to take additional steps to alert and educate health care providers on the signs and symptoms of measles. California health care providers have played a leading role in diagnosing and treating affected patients in our state. However, as recently reported by news reports, including a piece published in the Los Angeles Times on January 26, 2015, health care providers who were educated after this illness became more rare in our country may not have received the medical training needed to quickly recognize the illness.¹ We urge the CDC to ensure that physicians and other health care providers have all of the information that they need to be able to diagnose a case of measles should they encounter one.

We applaud the efforts of the CDC for bringing the number of measles cases in the United States from 481,530 in 1962 when the vaccine was introduced down to 37 cases in 2004. It is a great achievement that the homegrown measles cases were wiped out in 2000. It is because of this success that many younger health care providers did not receive extensive training on recognizing a measles infection. However, due to growing pockets of unvaccinated children, diseases such as measles are no longer a thing of the past. The current outbreak has already affected 91 Californians and many others across the country.

Given that this virus is so contagious, we are concerned that misdiagnosis or a delayed diagnosis will result in further spread of this preventable disease. Measles can resemble many other illnesses in the early stages so it is important for health care providers to know what to look for in order to make a correct diagnosis. We recognize that officials in county health agencies and the California Department of Public Health are working hard to ensure that providers have the information that they need to prevent the spread of Measles, but believe that the CDC should also be a leading partner in these efforts.

We cannot let this contagious disease reach the devastating proportions it once did and stand ready to work with you in this effort.

Sincerely,

¹ Brown, Eryn, Rong-Gong Lin II, and Rosanna Xia. "Once Easily Recognized, Signs of Measles Now Elude Young Doctors." Los Angeles Times. January 26, 2015. Accessed February 3, 2015.
<http://www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-measles-diagnosis-20150127-story.html>.

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