

# REPORT DISEASE AND HEALTH HAZARD NEWS OF INTEREST ALONG THE BORDER

June 13 - 19, 2024

## WEEKLY EVENTS

- On June 17, 2024, the Division of Epidemiology, Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health, reported that there is an increasing trend of COVID-19 cases in Thailand. From June 9 to 15, 2024, there were 2,881 patients admitted to hospitals, averaging 412 patients per day, with 7 deaths. Most of the deceased were from the 608 group. Additionally, there are ongoing cluster outbreaks. Regarding the influenza situation from January 1 to June 8, 2024, there were 174,513 reported cases and 10 deaths. The causes were influenza virus type A (9 deaths) and type B (1 deaths). Both diseases were mostly found in prisons, followed by schools, temples, military camps, and industrial factories, respectively.
- On June 17, 2024, the Department of Disease Control reported on the rising number of cases of Streptococcal Toxic Shock Syndrome (STSS) in Japan, totaling 977 cases this year. The disease presents symptoms similar to influenza but progresses rapidly, posing a risk of acute respiratory failure. Travelers are advised to check the disease situation in their destination areas and purchase health insurance in advance. It is also important to maintain personal hygiene throughout the journey. Currently, there are no travel restrictions or screening procedures at entry and exit points recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) regarding this issue. If travelers have any concerns, they can consult communicable disease control officers at the checkpoints. Those exhibiting initial symptoms of STSS, such as high fever, chills, and body aches, should seek medical attention immediately and inform healthcare providers about their travel history.

## MEASLES: A THREAT TO CHILDREN BUT PREVENTABLE WITH VACCINES

The regional meeting of WHO's South-East Asian Region showed that five member countries met the criteria for successful measles elimination: Bhutan, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The remaining six countries, including Thailand, still have endemic measles. Therefore, Thailand needs to continue strengthening its immunization program to effectively cover 95% of the population and meet the elimination certification criteria by 2026.

According to the Department of Disease Control Week 24 event surveillance report (June 10-16, 2024) clusters of measles outbreaks were reported by the Division of Epidemiology. Cases were found in Yala, Narathiwat, Pattani, and Sukhothai provinces, with 24 suspected cases and 10 laboratory-confirmed cases. Further details are under investigation.

The measles elimination program database indicated an upward trend in measles cases since February 2024. From January 1 to June 17, 2024, there were 1,674 reported cases of suspected measles, with 844 laboratory-confirmed cases and 125 epidemiologically linked cases. This is higher than the number of cases reported during the same period in the past three years. No deaths were reported, and 118 cluster outbreaks of measles were recorded, including outbreaks in 73 villages, 40 schools, one hospital, one music event, and one factory, with the highest number of events in Pattani province.

The situation shows a continuous increase in reported measles cases and the emergence of cluster outbreaks in other regions such as Mae Hong Son, Phuket, and Ranong. Since there is no specific treatment for measles, the best prevention, especially for young children, is vaccination. Public awareness campaigns and efforts to emphasize the importance of vaccination to parents, ensuring that children receive the complete series of vaccines as per the Ministry of Public Health's guidelines, are crucial for effective prevention.



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICIALS

Public Health Officials and Village Health Volunteers (VHVs) should coordinate to educate residents about measles, including its causes, symptoms, transmission, and prevention methods. Residents with symptoms of fever and rash are advised to see a doctor immediately. If diagnosed with measles, they should stop working or attending school and avoid traveling to densely populated areas to reduce the spread of the disease. Close contacts of measles patients should be monitored for fever and rash symptoms closely. During symptomatic periods, they should wear masks and avoid close contact with others.

The best prevention, especially for young children, is receiving two doses of the measles vaccine at 9 months and 18 months. Vaccines are available at nearby public health facilities. Healthcare workers should survey vaccine coverage in their areas and aim to vaccinate at least 95% of the target population to prevent community outbreaks. In cases of suspected measles, responsible personnel should conduct disease investigations, collect blood samples for laboratory confirmation within 48 hours, and report measles cases through the measles elimination program database. They should also identify and monitor high-risk close contacts to prevent further transmission in the community.

## INFORMATION COLLECTED AND ANALYZED BY

Multisectoral Capacity Development Program for Public Health Emergency Detection and Response in Border Areas

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## Sources

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