

Headline	Measles cases in Cordillera going down: DOH	
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Measles cases in Cordillera going down: DOH

Baguio City—An official of the Department of Health in Cordillera Administrative Region on Wednesday said there is a gradual decrease in measles cases for the past few weeks in the region.

“Although measles cases this year increased more than last year, yet basing on our epidemic threshold, we can see a gradual decrease of these cases in the past few weeks,” Karen Lonogan, DOH-CAR Regional Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit Senior Health Program Officer, said, citing the Disease Surveillance Report.

DOH records show that during the first eight weeks of the year, there is an increasing trend of measles cases, peaking on the 8th week with 98 cases.

The report noted a decreasing trend starting on the ninth week, with the 17th week recording only three cases.

Lonogan said they have conducted a vaccination program where they visited the different barangays in the region—doing house-to-house visits to reach children who have yet to get vaccinated.

In 2018, the Cordillera recorded only 43 measles cases from January 1 to April 30 with no recorded deaths. In 2019, the statistics spiked to 680 with three deaths.

Most of the cases this year were in Benguet with 257 cases and three deaths, Baguio with 250 cases, Apayao with 61, Abra with 46, Ifugao with 22, Mountain Province with 19 and Kalinga with 15, DOH records show. PNA

Lonogan said out of the 680 cases from January 1 to April 30, 2019, there were 268 or 39 percent afflicted with the disease who earlier received vaccines while 354 or 52 percent of them unvaccinated.

Fifty-eight of the patients or 9 percent of them do not know whether they were immunized as children or not.

The data also shows that 20 percent of the cases involve adults who are 25 years old and above followed by children who are one to four years old and babies below nine months old at 18 percent.

Dr. Mary Cristy Jamora, medical officer of the Pediatrics department at the Baguio General Hospital and Medical Center, said babies below nine months old who have been afflicted with measles is alarming as they are those who have not been vaccinated.

Measles vaccine is given to children at the age of nine months.

Lonogan said at the height of cases, the DOH conducted an Outbreak Response Immunization where they administered the measles vaccine to six months old babies.

Outbreak Response Immunization also aims to achieve a higher rate of vaccination for “herd immunity” so that younger age groups that cannot be vaccinated will also be protected.

The common symptoms of measles are dry cough, runny nose, sore throat, and rashes.