

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### ACN calls for nurse-led pop-up vaccination clinics to halt measles outbreaks

The Australian College of Nursing is calling on the Federal Government to coordinate the urgent establishment of nurse-led pop-up vaccination clinics, amid measles outbreaks.

Australia was declared measles-free in 2014, but 71 cases have already been recorded this year – more than all of 2024. We need to be proactive at this critical time, especially heading into winter and with school now back after the Easter break.

“The national target for measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccination coverage is 95 per cent, but from 2022 to 2023, vaccine uptake for children at 24 months of age dropped by 0.4% to 94.7%. This might seem minor, but with a disease as highly contagious as measles, even small declines in vaccination rates can have significant consequences for community protection,” said ACN chief executive, Adjunct Professor Kathryn Zeitz FACN.

“We need political leaders at the federal, state, territory and local government levels to corral resources to offer MMR catch-up clinics for target populations. We need make sure clinics are accessible to diverse sections of the community. This would complement GP clinics, which are overrun and struggle to provide the flexible service that support families and individuals to get vaccinated.”

International evidence suggests the median cost per case of a measles outbreak can be significant – with one study placing it at US\$32,805 in direct and indirect costs (Pike et al, 2020).

Nurses at pop-up clinics could also administer flu vaccines, and assess a patient’s vaccination status to develop any required catch-up schedules.

The Federal Department of Health should partner with state and territory health departments to set up an operational team to target low-coverage areas, and – in conjunction with community leaders – find suitable and accessible venues with hours tailored to community needs. Consideration could be given to pharmacies and Urgent Care Clinics hosting nurse immunisers.

“The number one defence against the spread of measles is immunisation. Two doses of the measles vaccine offer 99% protection against illness and serious complications. It’s safe, effective, free, and the best way to avoid serious illness,” said Adjunct Professor Zeitz.

“We must remember that the global movement of people means diseases like measles remain an ongoing threat, even in countries with strong vaccination programs. Nurses are the backbone of Australia’s immunisation workforce, administering more vaccines than any other healthcare professional group in Australia. As a flexible, highly skilled, and trusted health workforce, nurses remain vigilant and ready to respond to protect public health.”

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**References**

For the latest number of measles cases, check the National Notifiable Disease Surveillance System:  
<https://nindss.health.gov.au/pbi-dashboard/>

Pike, J., Leidner, A. J., & Gastañaduy, P. A. (2020). A review of measles outbreak cost estimates from the United States in the postelimination era (2004–2017): estimates by perspective and cost type. *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, 71(6), 1568-1576.