SUNY Plattsburgh Students Must Have Mumps Vaccine to Return To School on Monday, Commissioner Orders
Campus Outbreak Began February 23; 3 Cases Confirmed

ALBANY, N.Y. (March 19, 2010) – In response to the outbreak of mumps among students at the State University of New York (SUNY) at Plattsburgh, New York State Health Commissioner Richard F. Daines, M.D., has issued an order that all students who are not vaccinated against mumps and have not had mumps disease be excluded from attending school at SUNY Plattsburgh for the duration of the outbreak.

The State Health Department recommends that all students who have not received two doses of mumps vaccine be excluded from attending school at SUNY Plattsburgh until they are fully vaccinated or can show evidence of immunity.

“Our priority is to protect the health and well being of all students, faculty and staff at SUNY Plattsburgh,” said Commissioner Daines. “I have issued this order to ensure that students who have not been vaccinated against mumps get vaccinated as soon as possible. Vaccination will not only help protect these students from getting sick, but will help prevent the spread of this disease throughout the campus community.”

SUNY Plattsburgh has notified all unvaccinated students of the exclusion policy. The college, together with the Clinton County Health Department, held a mumps immunization clinic for students and staff on March 17. Additional clinics will be held next week at the SUNY Plattsburgh Health Center on a walk-in basis (call 518-564-2187 for information). The college has been on spring break this week.

Three cases of mumps have been confirmed since the outbreak began Feb. 23, with two more under investigation. Although the source of the current outbreak has not been identified, the ongoing outbreak of mumps in a religious community in Rockland and Orange counties and Brooklyn had its origin in England. Levels of mumps vaccination in England dropped after a published report that measles-mumps-rubella vaccine might cause autism in young children. That study has since been discredited and the paper retracted by the medical journal, but recurrences of measles and mumps have occurred in England as a result, with spread to other parts of the world, including the United States.
“Vaccinations are important to prevent diseases which still present a danger,” Commissioner Daines said. “In the modern age, diseases like mumps are only an airplane ride away. While no vaccine or medical treatment is 100 percent effective, two doses of mumps-containing vaccine will provide the best protection available against mumps.”

Individuals who believe they may have been exposed to mumps and do not know whether they are up-to-date on their mumps vaccination should contact their health care providers or local health department to find out whether they need to be vaccinated.

Mumps is a viral disease characterized by fever, headache, muscle weakness, loss of appetite, and swelling and tenderness of one or more of the salivary glands situated along the angle of the jaw and inside the mouth, including the parotid gland (located within the cheeks just below the front of the ear). Approximately one-third of infected people do not have noticeable salivary gland swelling.

The disease is transmitted by direct contact with saliva and discharges from the nose and throat of infected individuals. The incubation period is usually from 16 to 18 days, but may vary from 12 to 25 days. Mumps is contagious from three days before until five days after the onset of swelling and tenderness of the salivary glands. Immunity acquired after contracting the disease is usually long term.

While severe complications are rare, mumps can cause inflammation of the brain and/or tissue covering the brain and spinal cord (encephalitis/meningitis), inflammation of the testicles (orchitis), inflammation of the ovaries, inflammation of the pancreas, spontaneous abortion and deafness.

The exclusion order, authorized by state regulations, is intended to protect unvaccinated students from disease and to halt the spread of the outbreak. A small proportion of fully vaccinated students will not be fully protected because the vaccine is not 100 percent effective.

To locate a county health department, visit http://nyhealth.gov/nysdoh/lhu/map.htm. To learn about mumps visit, the State Health Department Web site.